

2015 NFL PREVIEW!

SCOUTING REPORTS • PREDICTIONS • FANTASY RANKINGS

SEPTEMBER 2015 | SIKIDS.com

Sports Illustrated KIDS

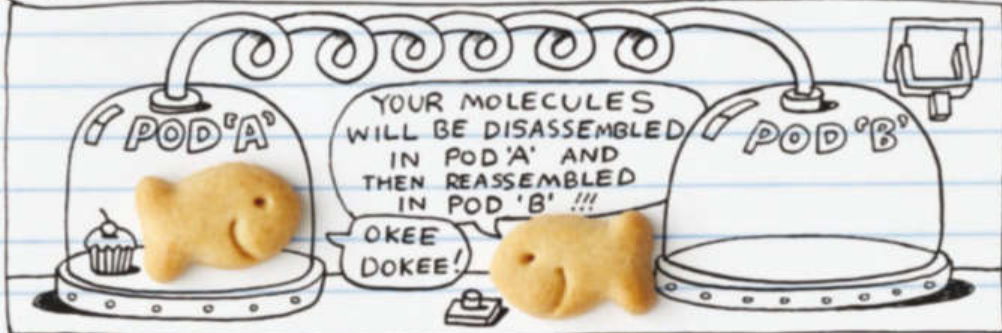
THE BACK IS BACK

Stars Like **DEMARCO MURRAY** Of the Eagles Are Running to Glory in the Pass-Happy NFL



THE ADVENTURES OF GOLDFISH[®] GRAHAMS

ONE DAY, DR. PROFESSOR WAS TESTING HIS TRANSPORT MACHINE...



WHAT THE DOCTOR DIDN'T REALIZE IS THAT HIS TEST SUBJECT HAD A **VANILLA CUPCAKE** IN THE POD, TOO!!



THE **GOLDFISH GRAHAM'S & CUPCAKE'S** MOLECULES MIXED TOGETHER !!



SUPER CHARGED WITH **VANILLA CUPCAKE FLAVOR !!!**



2015 NFL PREVIEW

24 THE NEW WAY FORWARD

The NFL is as pass-happy as it's ever been. But as the Seattle Seahawks have shown, the best way to get to the Super Bowl is to run there.

31 DEMARCO MURRAY

The reigning NFL rushing champ and Offensive Player of the Year is ready to take off in Philadelphia.

34 QUICK GUIDE Rule changes (real and silly), referees, rejuvenated players, and, drumroll please ... our award and playoff predictions!

36 AFC SCOUTING Who'll be the luckiest in the land, the current Colts QB or the former Colts QB? And what about those Super Bowl champs?

40 HALFTIME Take a break from the action with some fun activities.

42 NFC SCOUTING The usual suspects should finish at the top, but how will teams like the Dallas Cowboys react to losing their superstars?

46 JOB SWAP Two NFL rookies will have a chance to catch on as pros if they can adapt to playing different positions. Plus, those who already have.



SUDDENLY SUPER?

Colts QB Andrew Luck will try to avenge his team's loss in last year's AFC title game.

16 TOUR OF HISTORY The 2014 SportsKid of the Year and her Anderson Monarchs teammates hit the road this summer to play baseball and learn valuable lessons.

20 CARLI LLOYD She took over this year's World Cup final with an unforgettable three-goal performance. But before Lloyd was a tournament legend, she struggled.

FROM THE PAGES OF SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

48 FANTASY FOOTBALL Use this simple tear-out, with rankings from 1 to 250, to prepare for your season and make it through the frenzy of draft day.

COVER
Heinz Kluetmeier for Sports Illustrated

FAVORITES

- 2** Freeze Frame
- 7** Sports Cards
- 11** September Birthdays
- 13** Future Stars
- 14** LOL

- 27** Posters
- 52** What's the Call?
- 53** Games
- 54** Art Gallery
- 55** Comic Cards
- 56** Buzz Beamer

FREEZE FRAME

UNMATCHED

July 11, 2015 • London, England

Against Spain's Garbine Muguruza in the women's final at Wimbledon, Serena Williams won 6-4, 6-4 to secure her fourth-straight Grand Slam tournament win and 21st overall. The title put her in position to wrap up a calendar-year Grand Slam (victories at all four tournaments) at the U.S. Open in September, which no singles player has done in 27 years.

Photographs by

CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES;

BOB MARTIN FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (INSET)





FREEZE FRAME

ROUND-TRIPPER

July 13, 2015 • Cincinnati, Ohio

Batting in familiar territory during the Home Run Derby at this year's All-Star Game, Cincinnati Reds third baseman Todd Frazier, 29, surpassed 23-year-old Dodgers rookie Joc Pederson by one dinger in the final round to win 15-14. Frazier hit 15 balls out of the park in just four minutes and 30 seconds.

Photograph by
ELSA/GETTY IMAGES





ULTIMATE FANTASY EXPERIENCE!

Grab your friends and start a league on NFL RUSH Fantasy.
Compete for a chance to win a trip to the
2016 NFL Pro Bowl.



NFLRUSH.com/fantasy

*PARTICIPANTS MUST HAVE A PARENT'S OR LEGAL GUARDIAN'S PERMISSION PRIOR TO ENTERING TO PARTICIPATE FOR THE CHANCE TO WIN PRIZES IN THIS PROMOTION.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN in the NFLRUSH Fantasy 2015. Many Will Enter, Few Will Win. This Game May Not Be Used To Conduct, Advertise Or Promote Any Form Of Gambling.

Registration starts at 12:00:00 p.m. (noon) ET on 7/31/15 and ends at approximately 12:59:59 p.m. ET on 1/3/16 ("Registration Period"). Open to legal residents of the 50 U.S. and DC who are between 6 and 12 years of age as of the date of submission. Void where prohibited. Subject to Official Rules available at www.NFLRUSH.com during Registration Period or by sending a SASE for receipt by 2/11/15 to: NFLRUSH Fantasy 2015 RULES, C/O National Football League, 345 Park Ave, New York, NY 10154. Sponsor: The National Football League.

WARMUP



BURNING QUESTION

ARE EMOJIS THE NEW SPORTS LINGO?

BY SAM PAGE

Illustration by Dean MacAdam

REMEMBER WHEN DEANDRE JORDAN 🏀👉, only to 📞👉 the very next week? That probably depends — do you speak emoji?

Translation: Jordan agreed to terms with the Dallas Mavericks, only to change his mind and call up the Clippers for a second meeting. But that's about as much of the situation as you could possibly understand without being able to read *emoji* (literally “picture letters” in Japanese), the little images now popular in text messages. After Jordan began to doubt his decision to play for Dallas, players from both the Mavericks and Clippers frantically began tweeting emojis in the war to woo the NBA's rebounding leader.

First, Chandler Parsons, the Mavericks' forward and chief free-agent recruiter, tweeted simply “✈️,” signaling that he was flying en route to Jordan's Houston home. Clippers guard

J.J. Redick, who lives in Austin, Texas, responded simply with 🚗, and teammate Blake Griffin upped the ante with 🍌🚗🚗. L.A. point guard Chris Paul, who had been spotted riding a banana boat with rivals LeBron James and Dwyane Wade earlier in the summer, provided the punchline: 🍌🚗. (New Clipper Paul Pierce tried to get in on the fun, but he tweeted a picture of an emoji instead of the emoji itself. Old people, am I right?)

Ultimately, it seemed that Redick's car and Paul's banana boat were faster than Parsons' plane, as the Clippers set up in Jordan's house until he officially re-signed with the team shortly after midnight. But the emoji fun didn't stop there. The Warriors reminded everyone of their championship (🏆), while Kobe Bryant brought up all five of his (🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆). The Red Sox' David Ortiz even made a cross-sport comparison (🏈 > 🏀).

Evidence is mounting that the emoji craze threatens to take over the sports world. Before the NBA draft, one reporter asked prospects for their favorite one. Top pick Karl-Anthony Towns chose 😎. Top women's tennis

On SIKIDS.com we asked if you used emojis. You said:

YES 73%

NO 27%



players competed in the "WTA Emoji Challenge," in which they were asked to imitate a series of the faces. And voting for the final roster spots on the MLB All-Star team took a fun turn when hashtags like #VoteCueto added a tiny cartoon version of the player.

So are these tiny images just a fad, or are they an essential new part of the sports conversation? Here are some other sports-related uses for emojis we'd like to see:

- Replace the number scores in the dunk contest: Instead of an eight or a nine, judges could hold up a 🔥 or a 100.

- Reform tampering rules: We know teams are already too often in contact with players before they can actually file for free agency. Leagues should allow the communication, but only through emojis. A coach could text, for instance, "😏 + 💰 = 🏆?"

- New jerseys: The NBA already does nickname jerseys for special games. Why not jerseys with emoji

nicknames above the number? Steph Curry's could be 😏 or a matching 🏀 with Klay Thompson.

At the very least, emojis help as sports conversations happen in progressively smaller bursts. They say a picture is worth 1,000 words, and that can be a big help in just 140 characters! Speaking of words, I'm almost out, so keep 📖 for more great 🏀 🏈 🏊 🏏 🏐 🏑 🏒 🏓 🏔 🏖 🏗 🏘 🏙 🏚 🏛 🏜 🏝 🏞 🏟 🏠 🏡 🏢 🏣 🏤 🏥 🏦 🏧 🏨 🏩 🏪 🏫 🏬 🏭 🏮 🏯 🏰 🏱 🏲 🏳 🏴 🏵 🏶 🏷 🏸 🏹 🏺 🏻 🏼 🏽 🏾 🏿 in this issue of 🏀 🏈 🏊 🏏 🏐 🏑 🏒 🏓 🏔 🏖 🏗 🏘 🏙 🏚 🏛 🏜 🏝 🏞 🏟 🏠 🏡 🏢 🏣 🏤 🏥 🏦 🏧 🏨 🏩 🏪 🏫 🏬 🏭 🏮 🏯 🏰 🏱 🏲 🏳 🏴 🏵 🏶 🏷 🏸 🏹 🏺 🏻 🏼 🏽 🏾 🏿.

BIG NUMBERS

2 Hits for Dodgers outfielder Yasiel Puig on July 29. The hits broke a 2-for-24 slump. The reason Puig gave? A change in his video game playing habits. "I just stopped playing soccer video games," he said. "I've found, when I play baseball video games, I do better." It was a good day for Puig: He caught the ceremonial first pitch, thrown by his mom.



6' 2"

Height of the life-sized Mike Trout bobblehead that the Los Angeles Angels unveiled in July. With its base, the doll is actually a few inches taller than the 2014 American League MVP. "I don't think it can fit in my bedroom," said Trout. The doll just nodded.



7

Home runs hit by Texans defensive end J.J. Watt when he took batting practice at Minute Maid Park before an Astros game. Still, Watt said, "I like hitting people better."

45²/₃

Consecutive innings Zack Greinke of the Dodgers pitched without allowing a run. The streak was the longest since Orel Hershisier's record run of 59 shutout innings in 1988.



WATCH

BACK TO SCHOOL: FOOTBALL EDITION

Texas at Notre Dame

September 5, 7:30 p.m. ET, NBC

These teams haven't played each other since the mid-1990s, when Notre Dame beat Texas in back-to-back years. This is the first of another home-and-home series, and running back **Johnathan Gray** and the Longhorns, in their second season under coach Charlie Strong, will be eager to grab an early win after going 6-7 in 2014. It'll be a tall task since receiver **William Fuller** and the Irish are on many top 10 lists.

Alabama vs. Wisconsin (in Arlington, Texas)

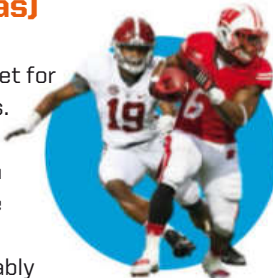
September 5, 8 p.m. ET, ABC

In 1928 the Badgers beat the Crimson Tide 15-0. They'll meet for the first time since then, at the home of the Dallas Cowboys. Wisconsin recovered from a 59-0 embarrassment against Ohio State in last year's Big Ten title game to beat Auburn in the Outback Bowl. Can running back **Corey Clement** and the Badgers take two in a row against an SEC powerhouse? Linebacker **Reggie Ragland** and the Alabama defense probably won't let that happen.

Ohio State at Virginia Tech

September 7, 8 p.m. ET, ESPN

The Hokies were the only team to beat OSU last year, thanks in part to a game-sealing interception return for a TD by safety **Donovan Riley**. The Buckeyes ran the table after that 35-21 loss, while Virginia Tech finished 7-6. The momentum is clearly with Heisman candidate **Ezekiel Elliott** and the defending national champs, but this year Ohio State will be playing in front of a hostile Hokies crowd. Could lightning strike twice?



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Arizona Cardinals defensive end **Calais Campbell** turns 29.

3 ▶ Nashville Predators winger **James Neal** is 28.

6 Point guard **John Wall** of the Washington Wizards celebrates his 25th birthday.

8 ▶ Pittsburgh Pirates starting pitcher **Gerrit Cole** turns 25.

10 Arizona Diamondbacks first baseman **Paul Goldschmidt** celebrates his 28th birthday.

15 ▶ Seattle Seahawks coach **Pete Carroll** turns 64.

16 Cleveland Indians rightfielder **Brandon Moss** is 32.

17 Tennis player **Tomas Berdych** of the Czech Republic celebrates his 30th birthday.

18 ▶ Power forward **Serge Ibaka** of the Oklahoma City Thunder turns 26.

19 Houston Astros rightfielder **George Springer** is 26.

21 Tulsa Shock center **Courtney Paris** celebrates her 28th birthday.

30 ▶ FC Kansas City midfielder and 2015 World Cup champion **Lauren Holiday** turns 28.

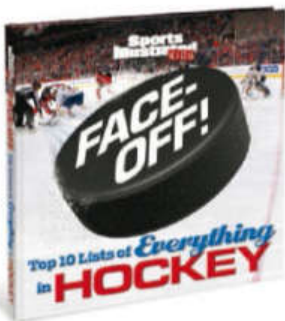


READ

Face-off! Top 10 Lists of Everything in Hockey

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED KIDS, September 29

From the Great One (Wayne Gretzky) to the greatest smiles in hockey history (hint: they're long on gums, short on teeth), this SI KIDS hockey book has it all. And yes, there is even an explanation for



why Detroit Red Wings fans throw an octopus on the ice. (It's one of the top 10 traditions.) The season starts next month. Time to get ready!



BEHIND THE SCENES

GAME CHANGERS

The Nationals' Racing Presidents have earned the love of baseball fans in and out of Washington, D.C. *By Dante A. Ciampaglia*

IT'S TWO HOURS before the first pitch on a sweltering June afternoon at Nationals Park. Washington is preparing to play the Pittsburgh Pirates. Fans hustle from ticket gates to cooler, shady spots.

But in an instant, everyone pauses. Four of the six Nationals' Racing Presidents — George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt — have emerged from a nearby elevator. The goal now is to get a photo with the 10-foot-tall icons.

The Presidents have been a fixture in D.C. since the Nationals' first game, in 2005. Since then, these larger-than-life characters have become some of MLB's most beloved mascots. (William Howard Taft also participates, and as of July, so does Calvin Coolidge.)

On the main concourse, in 90° heat, the giant heads of state mingle with fans for nearly an hour. They bend down to high-five wide-eyed toddlers, pose for photos with rowdy college students, and pretend to steal a promo car parked by the concession stands. Every President is swarmed with

fans, but TR, who was winless in his first seven years as a participant, is the clear fan favorite.

This is all a warmup, though. The race is the main event, and it's still four innings away. That gives Teddy, members of the Presidents' Secret Service, and Potato Pete (one of the Pirates' Pierogies) time to rehearse the finale of the day's mascot contest. They run through the steps; then, with about an inning and a half to go, everyone heads toward the field.

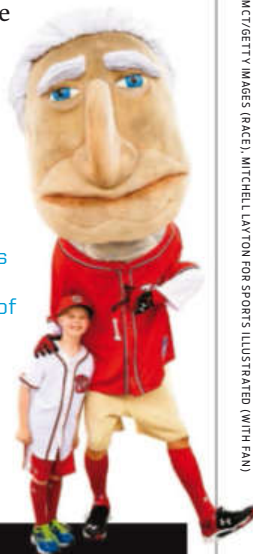
After a quick pep talk, the race is on — and it goes off without a hitch. The Presidents dash along the warning track, and as they get to the finish line, it's time for the moment Teddy and crew practiced.

Teddy sprints down the first base line. Pete jumps on a folding chair, then a table, and lunges for Teddy. Pete is caught in mid-air by the Secret Service, arms and legs flailing as he's dropped on a Pirates fan. The crowd goes wild as Teddy wins the race.

Back underneath Nationals Park, everyone is pumped. Says Tom Davis, Washington's senior manager of entertainment, "If there's one thing I would've changed . . ." He waits a beat. "It would've been nothing!" Presidents, Pierogies, and Secret Service celebrate.

But the jubilation is brief. The Presidents head back up to the concourse where fans are lined up, waiting to rub elbows with some of baseball's biggest personalities.

The Presidents are a hit with fans of all ages.





ON OUR RADAR

MORGAN DAY

HEIGHT: 5' 7"

BIRTHPLACE: BALTIMORE, MD

BIRTH DATE: JUNE 23, 1997

SPORT: LACROSSE

■ Last season, Morgan became the all time national high school scoring leader with 469 career goals. Before the end of the year, she fired off four more, finishing with 126 goals and 33 assists during the 2014-15 season.

■ The first-team U.S. Lacrosse All-America selection scored 10 goals against New Oxford High on April 28, and led Kennard-Dale High to an

undefeated regular season (16-0, 11-0).

■ Morgan also helped Kennard-Dale earn PIAA playoff berths in 2013 and '15, though the team lost in the opening round of this year's state tournament.

■ In four years as a varsity starter, Morgan picked up 235 ground balls, controlled 568 draws, and amassed 131 total assists. Morgan will play for Saint Francis University this spring.

SPORTSKIDS OF THE MONTH

LONDON PENNEY, 10

Manhattan Beach, CA
BASEBALL



In June, Landon hit the game-winning home run to win his third-straight Manhattan Beach Little League championship. As the league's youngest player, he was 7-1 and batted .330.

SAMMY KOENIG, 11

Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ
WRESTLING



Last season, the fifth grader was undefeated in the u-10 division of the Ken Garbadian Novice Wrestling Tournament. He pinned his final opponent in a career-best 28 seconds to win gold.

GRETA CANDREVA, 13

Katonah, NY
FENCING



Greta won the Y-12 women's épée national title at the 2015 USA Fencing National Championships & July Challenge. She also defeated the No. 1 ranked u-20 women's épéeist in Great Britain to earn bronze in the junior women's division.

ARE YOU A SPORTSKID?

If you think you have what it takes to be a SportsKid of the Month, submit your nomination at: SIKIDS.com/Contests/SportsKid





Submit your caption at SIKIDS.com/Contests. Your entry could appear in a future issue of the magazine.

FUNNY PHOTO

The winning caption as voted on SIKIDS.com:

"MLB: MAJOR LEAGUE BREAKDANCING."

— LUKE, 11, MASSACHUSETTS



"Left foot blue!"

— Dominic, 12, Michigan

"I can't help myself: I'm a Dodger."

— Carly, 14, Massachusetts

"I don't think this is what they meant when they said, 'Use your head.'"

— Will, 13, Kansas

"So much for New Balance!"

— Brady, 13, Wisconsin

"Sometimes I go head over heels for baseball."

— Lance, 11, Florida

"This is what happens when you try to infield fly."

— Daniel, 12, New Jersey

SOUND OFF

Who was your favorite teacher?

"I had two: my fifth grade homeroom teacher, Ms. Wise, and also my high school first aid teacher. Ms. Wise was just a really good teacher. She knew how to motivate me and get the best out of her students."

RYAN HOWARD

Philadelphia Phillies first baseman

"Ms. Shell. She was my third grade teacher, and I loved her because she was really sweet. She let us have a real rabbit in the classroom, and everybody got to take the rabbit home and take care of it for a night. I really loved that class. I won a science contest that year, too."

MICHAEL BROCKERS

St. Louis Rams defensive tackle

"Ms. Rome! She always let us have extra recess time and longer lunches. She took time before and after school to help me with my writing skills. The extra time she spent with me really helped me pass [a big test] in fourth grade with one of the highest scores in the parish!"

JARVIS LANDRY

Miami Dolphins wide receiver

"My first grade teacher, Ms. Iverson. I was in a first/second grade split class, and there were only eight of us first graders. She really took care of us. We hatched chicklets at the end of kindergarten, and then she let us keep the baby chicks — I think two of them — in our class. Later in the year we had hermit crabs."

CHRISTEN PRESS

USWNT and Chicago Red Stars forward





PET PALS

CANINE CELEB

Blue Jays ace **DAVID PRICE** talks about his dog, Astro, who has become almost as famous as his Cy Young Award winning owner.

As told to Shehan Jeyarajah

I GOT ASTRO in 2009 when I was called up from Triple A Durham to the Tampa Bay Rays. One of my teammates, [pitcher] Scott Kazmir, and I talked about how we both wanted to get a dog. He had gotten his dog, Rico, from one particular litter.

After that I watched the litter's cameras for two days and picked out Astro, a French bulldog. He was just different. I liked his color, he didn't have any spots, and he was just a big ol' ball of muscle. I liked that.

Since I got him, we've done some pretty cool things. In January 2012, we joined two of my teammates as grand marshals for the Gasparilla Parade of Pirates in Tampa. We rode in the front car, in a convertible. That December we got two keys to the city. They had a big key for me and a smaller one for

Astro. That was probably the coolest moment. He loves getting all the attention.

When I was traded to Detroit, I kept getting gift packages for Astro. He gets more gifts than I do. People would send dog treats, chew toys, and leashes.

In spring training this year, the Detroit clubhouse manager, Jim Schminkel, had a pin made for Astro so he could sit in the bullpen. I didn't let him, though, because I didn't want him out in the sun baking.

Over the years, he's taken on my personality. They say the longer you have a dog, the more they do that. I've never heard him growl; he's definitely a lover. He gets along with every dog and person he meets and has never gotten into a fight.



IndyCar driver and
2015 Indy 500 champion

JUAN PABLO MONTOKA'S FAVORITE THINGS



FOOD

Pasta with
marinara sauce

CARTOON

Yu-Gi-Oh!



SPORTS TEAM AS A KID

Chicago Bulls



MOVIE

Star Trek

SPORT TO WATCH BESIDES RACING

Golf

ATHLETE GROWING UP

Formula One champion
Ayrton Senna



ACTRESS

Natalie Portman

SUBJECT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Physics

ANIMAL ▶

My dog, Spot,
a French bulldog



TOUR OF HISTORY

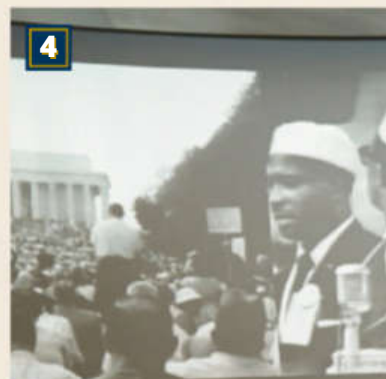
How did the 2014 SportsKid of the Year spend her summer? Mo'ne Davis and her **ANDERSON MONARCHS** teammates went on the road to play baseball and learn some valuable lessons.

BY MARK BECHTEL

Photographs by **Al Tielemans for Sports Illustrated**

THE ANDERSON MONARCHS achieved notoriety last year when seven players — including 2014 SportsKid of the Year Mo'ne Davis — were part of the Taney Dragons all-star team that advanced to the Little League World Series. This summer they took their act on the road. For 23 days the Monarchs traveled around the country on a barnstorming tour. They played games against local teams and visited several major league and minor league parks. But baseball wasn't the main purpose of the trip. The kids were on the road to learn, so when they weren't in their bus or on the field, they could often be found visiting civil rights landmarks.

The tour was the idea of the coach, Steve Bandura. In 1993, Bandura, who works for the Philadelphia Parks Department, started a tee-ball league in South Philadelphia that was comprised primarily of African-American kids. He named the league after Jackie Robinson, the first black major league player, and all of the teams were named after those from the Negro leagues. "I was bringing baseball back to this neighborhood where it hadn't been for 20 years," says Bandura, whose son, Scott, is the Monarchs' catcher. "I





ON THE ROAD

1. Mo'ne showed she can still bring it.
2. The team met Congressman John Lewis, a former Freedom Rider.
3. The Monarchs' bus is 68 years old.
4. The players took in a film at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta.
5. Without electronics, players passed the time on the bus with classic card games.



wanted to connect the kids and their families to the history.” To learn more about Robinson, the players had to do book reports on a biography of the Hall of Famer.

In '95, Bandura started a travel team, the Monarchs, made up of kids from the league. Every two years he assembles a new group, and they play baseball, basketball, and soccer together year-round. So the 14-year-old Monarchs who toured the U.S. this summer have been playing together since they were seven. To prepare for their trip, they met every Friday night for six months to watch documentaries about the civil rights movement. Once they hit the road, their stops included Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, the site of a 1965 march, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Atlanta.

The players' wheels for the trip was an authentic 1947 Flxible Clipper bus. When they were on it, they had to live by 1947 rules — no air conditioning, no mobile phones, no MP3 players. Why 1947? That was the year Robinson broke baseball's color line.





BARNSTORMERS

1. Sami Wylie got a little dusty in the field.
2. The Monarchs visited the site of a 1965 protest march.
3. The team played at Birmingham's Rickwood Field, the oldest park in the U.S.
4. Hall of Famer Hank Aaron talked to the kids in Atlanta.
5. The players met several major leaguers, including Miami's Dee Gordon.
6. Mo'ne and her teammates learned about MLK in Atlanta.
7. Myles Eaddy tried out an old-school mitt.

WOMEN'S
WORLD
CUP

Top of the World



A BOLD VISION

Lloyd (10) said before her hat trick heroics that she “visualized scoring four goals in the World Cup final.” Close enough!

Photograph by
**Maddie Meyer/FIFA/
Getty Images**

Carli Lloyd took over this year's World Cup final with an unforgettable three-goal performance. But before she cemented herself as a tournament legend, Lloyd struggled to be recognized.

AS TOLD TO CHRISTINA M. TAPPER

**WOMEN'S
WORLD
CUP**

Even if you weren't familiar with Carli Lloyd before this year's women's World Cup, chances are you know her name now. Despite netting game-winning goals to lift the U.S. to gold in the 2008 and '12 Olympics, Lloyd had largely flown under the radar. That is, until the midfielder had the biggest moment of her career on soccer's biggest stage.

During Team USA's 5-2 World Cup final win over Japan in July — a rematch of the 2011 final, which the U.S. lost in dramatic fashion — Lloyd scored on a corner kick, then drilled a loose ball into the net. She capped the performance with a stunning, video game-like wonder-strike from the center circle — 50 yards! It took Lloyd only 16 minutes to record the first-ever hat trick in a Women's World Cup final (and the second including men's finals), but getting to that moment took much longer.

Before Lloyd won the 2015 Golden Ball as the World Cup's best player, she was cut from the Under-21 team and benched while on the national team. SPORTS ILLUSTRATED KIDS recently caught up with Lloyd, who shared her journey to that shining moment.



WAKE-UP CALL

I developed a passion for soccer pretty early. I was five years old when I started playing, and I was pretty natural with it. As a kid, I played for the rec team in Delran, New Jersey, before I went on to play club soccer. I wasn't into dolls or girly things. Everywhere I went, I brought a ball — family functions, birthdays, holidays. I was constantly playing.

I stayed in New Jersey to play for Rutgers University. In the fall I was

playing with Rutgers, and in the spring I was traveling with the U-21 Women's National Team. There was a lot going on, but I managed. Then I got cut from the U-21 team.

For pretty much my whole youth career, I was the best player on every single team — high school, club, and Rutgers. Then I reached the U-21 team, and there were a lot of other great players. When you mix them together, you have to be even better than the rest so you can stand out. I



**Becky
Sauerbrunn**

THE KEY TO THE D

Thanks to these two defenders, the United States was able to keep opponents' scores low during this year's World Cup.

Team USA, which only allowed three goals in seven games, had one of the best back lines at the World Cup. That dominance started with Becky Sauerbrunn and Julie Johnston, the United States' yin and yang center backs. "You can't have two players who are exactly the same," says Sauerbrunn. "[Julie] was really good at interrupting the play that was in front of us. I'm more: O.K., read the situation, be a little bit more of a pessimist, and figure out where plays could go wrong." At 23, Johnston is seven years Sauerbrunn's junior and fed off that veteran leadership. "It's really awesome to have someone that you play next to who is just so confident and brings it to the back line and understands the game well," says Johnston. Defense is a complex art, but Sauerbrunn concisely summed up the duo's essence: "I would clean up after everything, while [Julie] was the one who was creating the destruction."

— Connor Mellas



**Julie
Johnston**



struggled with that. I wasn't working as hard as I should have been; I was just relying on my talent. I reached a plateau and was cut from

the team in 2003. I happened to be re-invited to the team because there was an injury, but at that point I was ready to hang up my cleats. Shortly after that, my dad introduced me to James Galanis, who was training my brother's team. My dad thought James could change my mind and help me. I was willing to give it a try. I called him up, and I've been training with him ever since.

James identified my weaknesses. No other coach had done that. I had coaches tell me that I'm great and that I'm the best. When I met James, he told me I had a long way to go. James's philosophy is based on five pillars: physical power, mental toughness, character, technical skills, and tactical awareness. My tactical awareness and

HATS OFF

Lloyd (scoring and holding trophy) powered the U.S. to a World Cup win, then celebrated with a historic ticker-tape parade in New York City.

technique were fairly decent. But my mental toughness, physical power, and character were really, really weak. When I first met James, I was very unfit. I'd blame coaches and



teammates for things that I wouldn't take responsibility for. At that point, I knew some things had to change.

SEIZE THE MOMENT(S)

In my first World Cup, in 2007, I had played the first three games, and then I had been benched the last three. It wasn't how I thought my first major tournament would go. It was also a time when I was able to reflect and dig deeper. I needed to be better for the Olympics the following year.

And I did come back better and stronger. To go to the Olympics, play every minute, and score a couple of important goals — that gave me a boost of confidence.

Then came the 2011 World Cup final. It was awful. You come that close, and one penalty kick is the deciding factor? Some of the best players miss penalty kicks. I missed. That was hard. And I was benched right before the London Olympics in 2012. I started to think my career was over. I felt like I had failed. But I had a job to do, so I had to prepare. I was

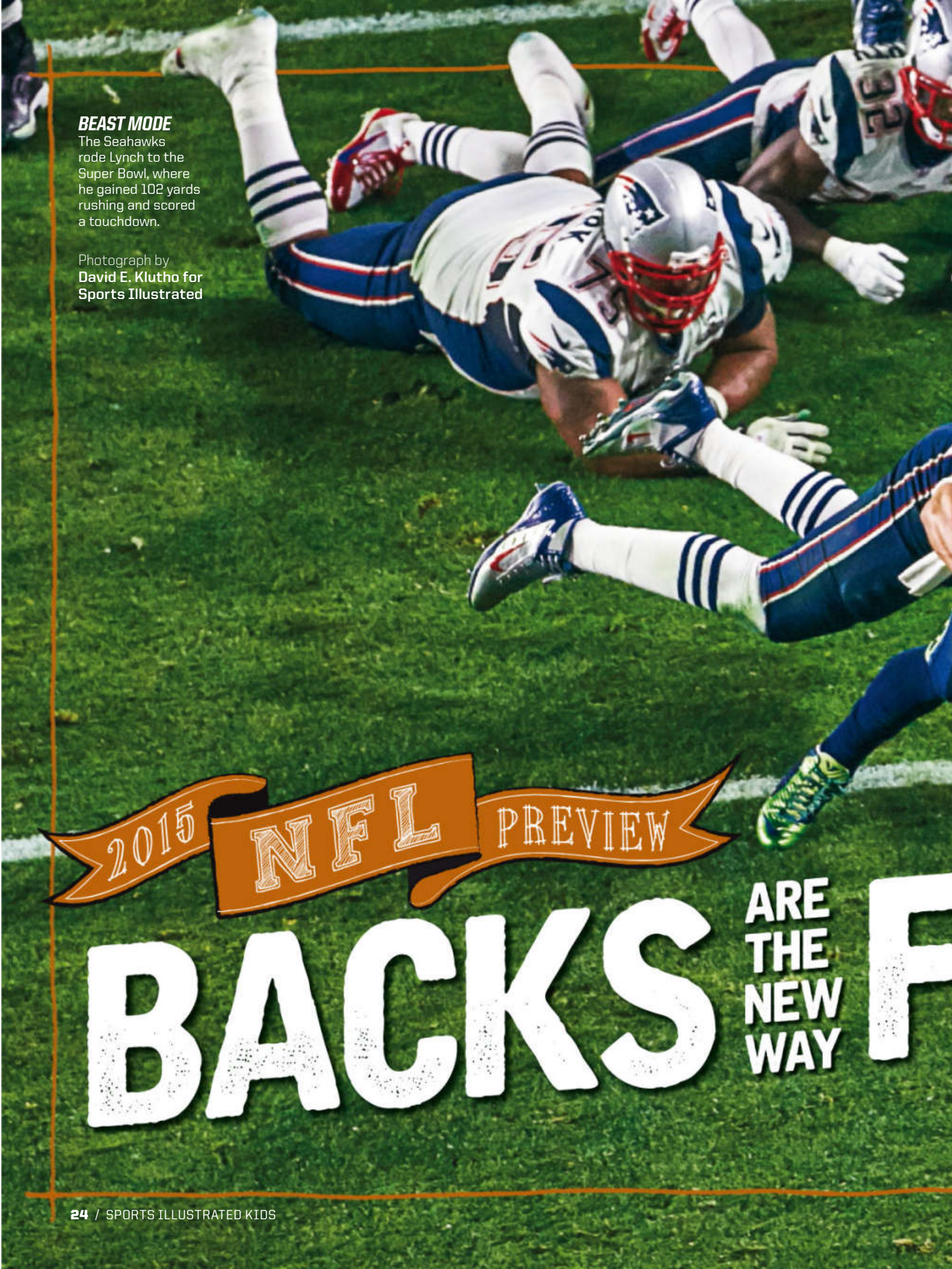
ready for my chance to play. Sixteen minutes into the first game, I subbed in for an injured teammate. I scored the winning goal and continued to persevere every round to help our team win gold.

There were times when I was crying and upset. Missing a PK and then being benched — that's no fun. But I upheld one of the five pillars: character. I was cheering my teammates and smiling, and I knew I'd get a moment and would seize it. It felt so great when I did.

In this year's World Cup, for the first three group games, my team and I weren't really attacking like we should have. My confidence was

dipping. James was very vocal over text, sending me encouraging messages. (I decided that I didn't want him or my family there, so I could really focus.) He told me to take risks and not worry about making mistakes. In the knockout round, I got my first goal on a PK against Colombia, and I think that is what jump-started everything. With each game after that, I became more confident. I'm built to last six or seven games, so I knew I could keep it up and make things happen, and that's what I did. The hat trick in the final was great, but helping my team win it all was even better.

This journey has taught me so much. If you don't have difficult times, you don't learn or break barriers. You may see me at a game or on television, but what you don't always see are the struggles, the obstacles, and the many hours I spend training. And my quest to outwork my opponents every single day. All of that has helped me get this far. ■



BEAST MODE

The Seahawks rode Lynch to the Super Bowl, where he gained 102 yards rushing and scored a touchdown.

Photograph by
David E. Klutho for
Sports Illustrated

2015

NFL

PREVIEW

BACKS

ARE
THE
NEW
WAY

F



L

ast year's SPORTS ILLUSTRATED KIDS NFL preview issue was all about quarterbacks. It's a pass-happy league, to be sure, and there's virtually no way for a team to be competitive without a strong player under center. As a result, every legitimate Super Bowl contender has a great passing game.

But what separates those contenders? What

gives one explosive offense an edge over another?

More and more, the answer to that question is running backs. Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson made news in the offseason when he signed a mammoth four-year contract worth \$87.6 million. The reason Seattle paid that whopping sum is that Wilson has led the team to a 42-14 record in his three years there, ranking in the top 10 in passer rating each season and taking Seattle to the last two Super Bowls. Clearly he's a member of the NFL's quarterbacking elite.

Several teams can claim that of their QB, but only the Seahawks can say they have the league's most dominant rushing attack. Seattle ran for 2,762 yards, the most by any team since 2006. Leading the way was Marshawn Lynch, who put up 1,306 yards. (Wilson chipped in 849, showing that not all rushing comes from backs.) That ground game gives them a great chance to advance to a third straight Super Bowl. (You can see our full predictions on page 35, but here's a spoiler: We think the

FORWARD

THE NFL IS AS PASS-HAPPY AS IT'S EVER BEEN. BUT AS THE SEATTLE SEAHAWKS HAVE SHOWN, THE BEST WAY TO GET TO THE SUPER BOWL IS TO RUN THERE.

By Mark Bechtel

Seahawks are going to be really good.)

Seattle has split its last two Super Bowl appearances, but the Seahawks really should be shooting for a three-peat. They had a great chance to win last year's game, but coach Pete Carroll surprisingly called a pass play on second down with 26 seconds left at the New England one-yard line instead of giving the ball to Lynch. The pass was intercepted, sealing the Patriots' 28–24 win.

Finding Balance

Even though New England didn't put up the eye-popping numbers that Seattle did, the Patriots used the run to their advantage. "The team that won the Super Bowl last year, when they were struggling early in the year offensively, what did they start to do in order to turn their season around? They started to run the football more," says Bills defensive coordinator Dennis Thurman.

The end result was a more balanced offense. Even though the Patriots finished just 18th in the league in rushing yards, by showing that they could move the ball on the ground they forced opposing defenses to at least worry about the run. That allowed the passing game to flourish under Tom Brady.

New England wasn't the only team to realize it needed to shape up its rushing attack. Says Thurman, "There's no one better during the regular season at throwing the football than Peyton Manning, but toward the end of last year, what did [Manning's Denver Broncos] start to do to get ready for playoff football? They ran the football."

One of the biggest moves of the offseason came when the Philadelphia Eagles signed free agent running back DeMarco Murray (*page 31*). That made Murray the first reigning rushing champ to change teams. And it elevated the Eagles to the role of favorite in the NFC East.

Run to Win

Carroll has been preaching the importance of a strong running game since he took over as Seattle's coach in 2010. After trading for Lynch during that season, the Seahawks have used him as a workhorse — almost always. Seattle dropped two games early last year in which Lynch ran the ball a total of only 16 times. "Whenever we're running the ball a lot, then we're fine," Carroll said at the time. "We've got to get right back to it,

RUNNING WILD

These backs will be in the spotlight.

FRANK GORE

The Indianapolis Colts had one glaring weakness last year: Their leading rusher, Trent Richardson, had only 519 yards and averaged just 3.3 yards per carry. Enter Frank Gore. The 32-year-old has run for 1,000 yards in eight of his 10 NFL seasons. Last year he was with the San Francisco 49ers, and at times it looked like he might be slowing with age. But in the final two games of the season he ran for 158 and 144 yards — the first time he had back-to-back games of at least 140 yards since 2006. If he's got enough fuel left in his tank, he could give the Colts the balance they need to win the AFC.



EDDIE LACY

The Green Bay Packers had one of the NFL's most explosive passing attacks long before Aaron Rodgers took over at QB in 2008. Now, thanks to Lacy, the Pack almost has a ground game to match. The 25-year-old comic book lover has run for more than 1,100 yards in each of his first two seasons. At 5' 11", 230 pounds, Lacy is a bullish runner. Last year he improved his pass-catching skills, so he no longer had to leave the field in passing situations. He'll need to continue to develop if the Packers, who narrowly lost the NFC championship game to Seattle, are going to beat the Seahawks at their own game.



because that's the way we play. And that's the way we need to be playing."

Carroll also explained, "We don't ever want to play a game when Marshawn carries the ball 10 times. That's not enough. That's not a format that we're trying to build from."

After Carroll said that, Lynch only had one game with fewer than 14 rushing attempts — a blowout win in which he carried 10 times for 103 yards and took much of the second half off. Following their slow 3–3 start, the Seahawks romped their way to victory in 11 of their final 13 games.

That success proved what Thurman said about life in today's NFL: "You throw to score, and you've got to run it to win."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2014-15 Lynch rushed for 1,306 yards and received his fifth Pro Bowl nod as the Seahawks advanced to their second-straight Super Bowl. Though Seattle lost to the Patriots, Lynch rumbled for 102 yards.

2010 The Bills traded Lynch, a 1,000-yard rusher in two of the three previous years, to the Seahawks in October. He rushed for 573 yards in the season's remaining 12 games before going on to have the best years of his career. In each of his first four full seasons in Seattle, Lynch rushed for at least 1,200 yards and 11 TDs.

2006 A social welfare major with a 3.2 GPA at Cal, Lynch was the Pac-10's Offensive Player of the Year in his third and final season with the Bears. He set the school career record for 100-yard games (17), gained 3,830 yards from scrimmage, and scored 35 TDs. As a freshman, in 2004, Lynch averaged a conference-best 8.8 yards per carry while taking handoffs from future Super Bowl champion Aaron Rodgers.

SEPTEMBER 2015

Photograph by
JOHN W. McDONOUGH FOR
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

MARSHAWN LYNCH

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS
RUNNING BACK

Sports
Illustrated
KIDS

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2014 After an injury-plagued 2013 season, Foster had the fourth 1,000-yard rushing season of his six-year career. He finished with 1,246 yards and was named to his fourth Pro Bowl.

2010 Foster began his second season in the NFL — and first as a featured back — with a bang. On opening day, he rushed for a team-record 231 yards against the Colts. He went on to lead the NFL in rushing (1,616 yards), becoming the second undrafted player to win the league rushing title.

2008 Foster ended his college career at Tennessee as the school's second all-time leading rusher, with 2,964 yards. (He majored in philosophy, and he is one of the NFL's deeper thinkers.) But a subpar senior season meant that Foster went unpicked in the 2009 NFL draft. The Texans signed him as a free agent and placed him on the practice squad, where he remained until late in the season.

SEPTEMBER 2015

Photograph by
DAVID E. KLUTHO FOR
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

ARIAN FOSTER
HOUSTON TEXANS
RUNNING BACK

Sports Illustrated
KIDS

ON THE RUN

**THE REIGNING
NFL RUSHING
CHAMP AND
OFFENSIVE
PLAYER OF
THE YEAR
IS READY TO
TAKE OFF IN
PHILADELPHIA.**

By Christina M. Tapper

Photographs by
Heinz Klutmeier for
Sports Illustrated

W

hen DeMarco Murray gets away, it's trouble.

Such was the case in last year's Week 6 matchup

between the Seattle Seahawks and the Dallas Cowboys. During the last three plays of the Cowboys' game-winning drive, the then Dallas running back caused major problems. It started with 25- and six-yard runs by Murray, who led the Cowboys' charge to Seattle's 15 with 4:02 remaining. It ended when he raced up the middle and into the end zone for a touchdown, leaving Seattle's run defense — the best in the league — flat on its face. (Even a takedown attempt by Seahawks' cornerback

Richard Sherman near the goal line failed.)

The difficulty in stopping this gridiron troublemaker, who had 115 yards in the Cowboys' 30–23 win, lies in his body control and balance. When Murray finds a hole, he goes for it — sidestepping a linebacker here, wiggling away from a safety there — before surging upfield. If the running lane is clogged, he will stiff-arm a defender and accelerate. If that fails and someone gets a hand on him, he'll employ a spin move or two to slip away. Then he's gone.

"At the end of runs DeMarco was always going forward," Dallas coach Jason Garrett said after last season. "Always going downhill. You thought he made four [yards], but he made six. You thought he made six, but he made a first down."

Murray was again on the move during this year's free-agency period. In March, he bolted to the Philadelphia Eagles, signing a five-year, \$42 million contract. The Cowboys' loss is now their NFC East rival's gain: Murray led the NFL in rushing last year (his 1,845 yards in 2014 set a Cowboys record) and is the reigning NFL Offensive Player of the Year. He also became the first player in league history to start the season with eight consecutive 100-yard rushing games.

As he begins his fifth NFL season, Murray is gearing up to slip right into Eagles coach Chip Kelly's fast-paced offense and take off.

AND HE'S OFF...

Murray broke Jim Brown's 56-year-old record when he rushed for 100 yards or more in the first eight games of 2014.



BACK FOR MORE

Murray could be the first player to lead the league in rushing in consecutive seasons since 2007.

The Natural

Before Murray became notorious for escaping linebackers, he was one. During his youth football days in Las Vegas, Murray played on defense, while the running back position was filled by Quinton Carter, who played free safety for the Denver Broncos in 2014. Just before Murray arrived at Bishop Gorman High School, he switched to running back. It was a natural fit for him. "I went to a camp the summer before ninth grade and did different kinds of drills. Coaches saw potential in me at running back, and the rest is history," Murray says.

He powered Bishop Gorman to three conference championships. As a senior in 2005, he was named the Sunset Region Offensive Player of the Year after rushing for 1,947 yards and 27 touchdowns.

When he wasn't breaking tackles, Murray was a forward on the school's basketball team (he helped the squad win a state title in his final year) and a 100-meter sprinter for the track and field team.

A four-star recruit and the top-ranked running back in Nevada, Murray chose to attend the University of Oklahoma, where Adrian Peterson was already breaking records at the position. Murray

redshirted during his first year on campus, then got a chance to leave his own mark the following fall after Peterson left for the NFL.

Despite suffering a dislocated kneecap and a hamstring injury during his sophomore year, Murray averaged 6.9 yards for every rush, reception, or kickoff return over four seasons

as a Sooner. His 6,718 all-purpose yards and 65 total touchdowns (3,685 yards and 50 TDs rushing) are school career records.

Rising to the Top

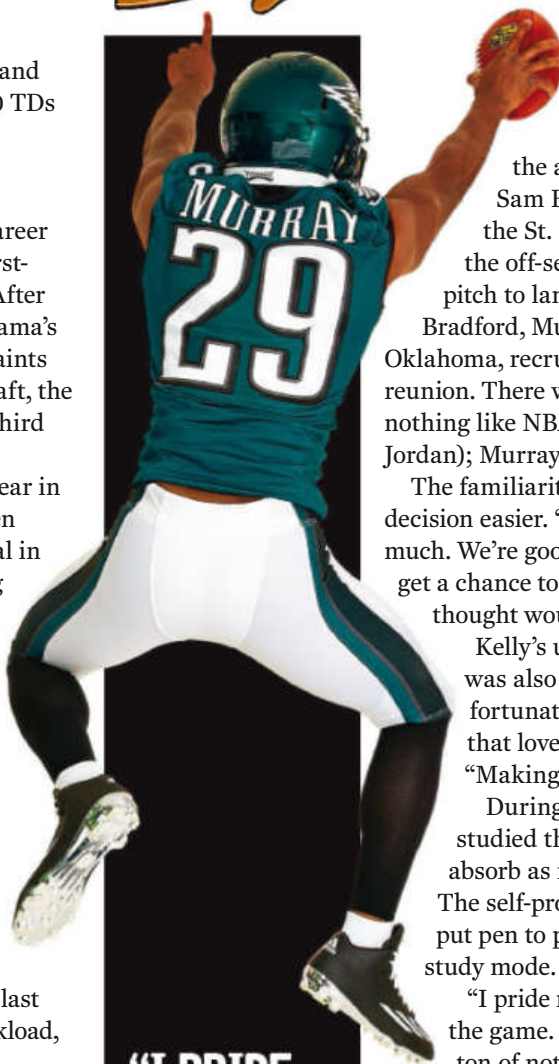
While Murray enjoyed an outstanding career at OU, NFL teams didn't think he was first-round draft material. Or second round. After five running backs — starting with Alabama's Mark Ingram, whom the New Orleans Saints chose — were picked in the 2011 NFL draft, the Cowboys finally selected Murray in the third round, with the 71st pick.

He ran for 897 yards during his first year in the league, and against the Rams, he even rushed for the second-highest rookie total in league history (253 yards). The following two seasons, Murray battled injuries that kept him off the field for eight games (a sprained foot and MCL). This worried fans — and fantasy team owners — who wondered if he was becoming injury-prone.

Despite his aches and pains, Murray broke 1,000 yards rushing and received a Pro Bowl nod in 2013. Then came an impressive 2014 during which he confirmed that when healthy, he's nearly unstoppable. He carried the ball 392 times and scored 13 rushing touchdowns last season — the most in his career. The workload, although taxing, made him a menace to opposing teams. And there was no stopping him. Not even when he broke his hand in December against the Eagles. He had surgery the next day, before rushing for a touchdown in a win over the Indianapolis Colts the following Sunday.

Record-setting feats aside, Murray also helped shift the perception of Dallas as an overrated and underachieving team. With help from their star running back, the Cowboys were changing minds with statement wins against the Seahawks and the Colts. They won the NFC East and returned to the postseason after a four-year hiatus, though the team lost in its NFC divisional game to the Green Bay Packers — despite 123 yards on the ground from Murray.

"It was such a fun year, and individual success is always a blessing. But we came up short as a team," Murray says.



"I PRIDE MYSELF ON BEING A STUDENT OF THE GAME," SAYS MURRAY. "I WATCH A LOT OF FILM."

A Rival No Longer

Murray now starts a new chapter in Philadelphia. With the assistance of quarterback Sam Bradford, who was traded from the St. Louis Rams to the Eagles in the off-season, Philadelphia made a big pitch to land the prized running back. Bradford, Murray's roommate at Oklahoma, recruited his old teammate for a reunion. There were no emojis used (so it was nothing like NBA teams vying for DeAndre Jordan); Murray said they spoke by phone. The familiarity of an old pal made the decision easier. "He didn't have to say too much. We're good friends," Murray says. "To get a chance to play with Sam again, I thought would be great."

Kelly's up-tempo, zone read offense was also appealing to Murray. "I'm fortunate to have landed on a team that loves to run the ball," he says. "Making this choice, it just felt right."

During the off-season, Murray studied the Eagles' games and tried to absorb as much information as possible. The self-proclaimed football nerd even put pen to paper when he was in study mode.

"I pride myself on being a student of the game. I watch a lot of film and take a ton of notes, not only on my position but also on offensive linemen, receivers, routes, blocking, and passing concepts. I've watched every game of theirs from last season," he says.

Is his handwriting legible though?

"It's pretty good, I think," Murray says. "It's not too sloppy. As long as I can read it, it's fine."

In between study sessions, Murray will be tasked with giving the Eagles a jolt. The team has finished 10–6 in each of the past two seasons and has made the playoffs only once in the last three years. (Philly lost its wild-card game in 2013.)

It'll be a tough job for Murray, who at 27 has reached late middle age for a running back. He's far from old, certainly, but he's not young in football terms, especially considering that the average pro career length at his position is less than four years. Knowing Murray, he'll just run with it. ■

GAME ON!

GET YOUR
QUICK GUIDE
TO THE NFL
SEASON.

The NFL wants excitement? We're on it. By Connor Mellas

Hoping to encourage more teams to go for two-point conversions, the NFL is instituting a new rule for the 2015 season that moves extra-point attempts from the two-yard line back to the 15. Kickers hit 99.3% of point-after attempts last season, so the intent is to make the extra point less of a sure thing. Taking a cue from the new regulation, here are some rules SI KIDS would implement to make the NFL a bit more fun.

MASCOT INTEGRATION Mascots are required to suit up for exactly one play per game. This rule isn't perfect yet, as mascots like Billy Buffalo, the Bills' 8-foot-tall team representative, will have an advantage over mascots like Oakland's Raider Rusher, whose gigantic head limits his explosiveness. (Teams without mascots would be able to recruit a ridiculously dressed fan.)

POETIC JUSTICE A player who lands a cheap shot on an opponent must read an apology poem in the postgame press conference. For example: I'm sorry I took out your knee. / I'm sure you'd gladly agree / That was not very nice. / Can I get you more ice? / Good luck with your surgery.

KAZOOS FOR THE CREW Are whistles effective at calling a play dead? Extremely. Are kazoos?

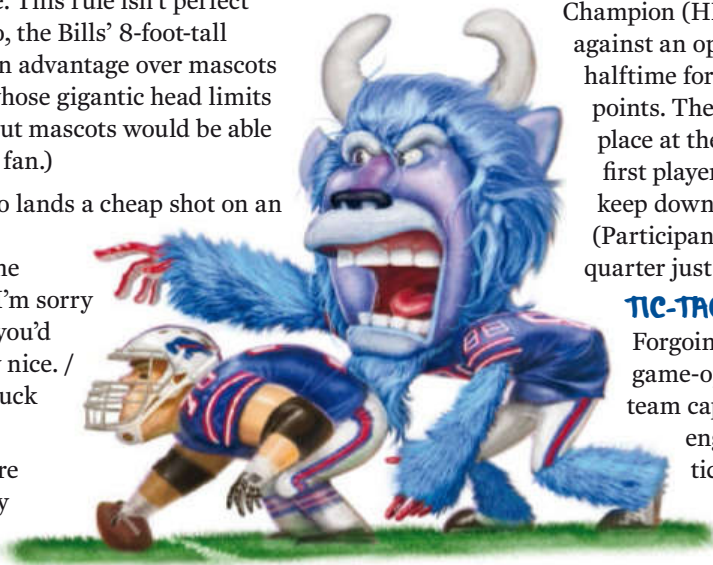
That remains to be seen. They do, however, sound significantly funnier than whistles, so why not replace the officiating crew's whistles with these instruments?

REFEREE MOBILIZATION To keep up with the speediest players and limit the need for video replay, NFL officials may ride scooters or Segways down the field. This privilege will be revoked if the league discovers a persistent pattern of players' or coaches' toes being run over.

DOG DUEL Each team will designate a Hot Dog Champion (HDC), who will compete against an opposing HDC at halftime for an additional three points. The competition will take place at the 50-yard line, and the first player to consume — and keep down — five hot dogs wins. (Participants may sit out the third quarter just in case.)

TIC-TAC THE TOSS

Forgoing the traditional, game-opening coin flip, team captains will engage in a game of tic-tac-toe to determine ball possession.



A NEW FACE ON THE FIELD By Lauren Shute

Sarah Thomas grew up on the sideline, watching her two older brothers compete on Mississippi football fields. After gaining nearly 20 years of football experience, Thomas will make her NFL debut as the league's first full-time female official this season. For the last two years, Thomas participated in the NFL's officiating development program, refereeing training camps and preseason games. And though Shannon Eastin was the first female ref to make calls in a pro game (during the 2012 referee lockout), Thomas will be the first woman to consistently blow the whistle — she'll be a line judge — on Sundays.

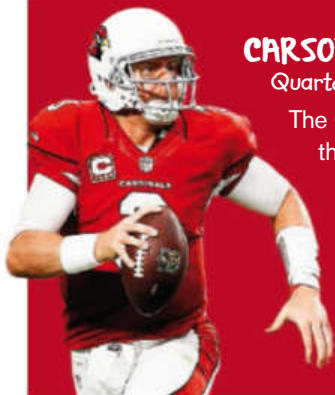
The mother of three worked for eight years at the high school level before getting her chance in the NCAA. She was the first female to officiate a major college football game (in 2007) and the first to work a college bowl game (in '09). Look for her on NFL fields this fall!



FIRST AID

Back from the Infirmary

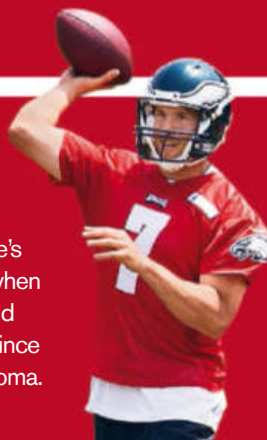
Expect these players to make a difference for their teams now that they're healthy again. BY LAUREN SHUTE



CARSON PALMER

Quarterback, Arizona Cardinals

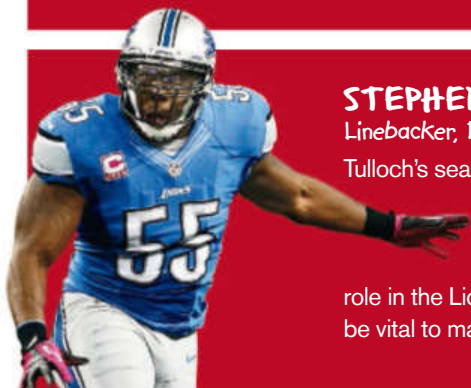
The Cardinals looked as though they might contend for their hometown Super Bowl with Palmer leading the way early last year. But when the veteran was out with shoulder and ACL injuries, the Cards missed him dearly: The team went 6-0 in games he started and 5-5 when playing without him. A healthy Palmer will earn his first-ever playoff win this season.



SAM BRADFORD

Quarterback, Philadelphia Eagles

The Rams traded Bradford to the Eagles in March, and Philadelphia's offense now depends on the six-year veteran. He's had plenty of downtime to study film over the last two years, when he sat out 25 games after twice tearing his left ACL. He should be ready to run coach Chip Kelly's quick offensive schemes, since he won the Heisman while running a spread offense at Oklahoma.



STEPHEN TULLOCH

Linebacker, Detroit Lions

Tulloch's season infamously ended last September when he suffered an ACL tear after an unfortunate sack celebration against Green Bay. With Ndamukong Suh Miami-bound, Tulloch's role in the Lions' defense won't just be important – it will be vital to maintaining a ferocious unit.

JADEVEON CLOWNEY

Outside Linebacker, Houston Texans

Clowney heard his name called first at the 2014 NFL draft, but because of knee problems, he was able to play in just four games. He finally underwent microfracture knee surgery last December. The Houston defense is so talented it may not need Clowney to have success, but his presence will give the Texans the league's best D.



SI KIDS PICKS

AWARD PREDICTIONS

MVP

Andrew Luck
Indianapolis Quarterback

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

J.J. Watt
Houston Defensive End

OFFENSIVE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Kevin White
Chicago Wide Receiver

DEFENSIVE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Leonard Williams
N.Y. Jets Defensive Lineman

PLAYOFFS

-AFC-

Baltimore Ravens
Indianapolis Colts
New England Patriots
Denver Broncos

WILD CARDS

Cincinnati Bengals
Houston Texans

-NFC-

Green Bay Packers
Atlanta Falcons
Philadelphia Eagles
Seattle Seahawks

WILD CARDS

Chicago Bears
New York Giants

SUPER BOWL

**SEAHAWKS
OVER COLTS**

Turn page for all 32 teams'

**SCOUTING
REPORTS**

SCOUTING REPORTS

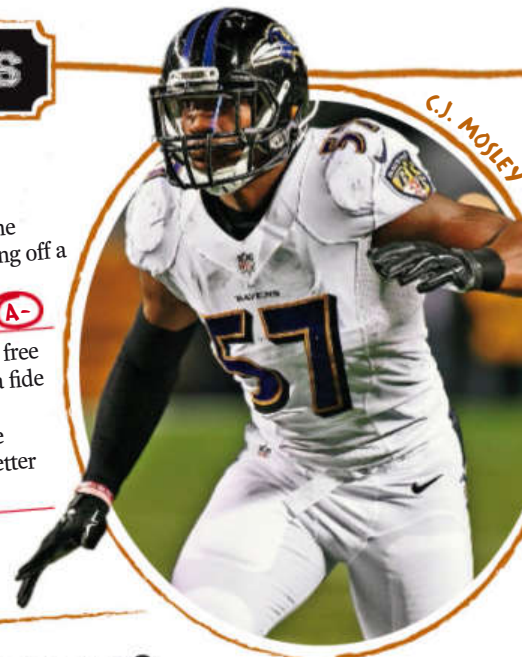
AFC NORTH

1 BALTIMORE RAVENS 2014 RECORD: 10-6

OFFENSE: The Ravens have a new offensive coordinator (Marc Trestman) for the fourth time in four years. Quarterback Joe Flacco (3,986 yards, 27 TDs) is coming off a great year, and the most important skill players, running back Justin Forsett (1,266 yards) and wideout Steve Smith (79 catches), are back and ready to go. **(A-)**

DEFENSE: Five-time Pro Bowl defensive tackle Haloti Ngata left for Detroit in free agency. Baltimore hopes nosetackle Brandon Williams will emerge as a bona fide anchor to fill the void. Ruthless linebackers Elvis Dumervil (a team-record 17 sacks) and C.J. Mosley (second-team All-Pro as a rookie) both made the Pro Bowl last season, and the Ravens defense should be just as good or better than last year's, which was the sixth-stingiest in the league. **(A-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . listen to the teacher. One of Baltimore's greatest assets is the guy wearing the headset, John Harbaugh — who has taken Baltimore to the playoffs six times in seven years — on the sideline, the Ravens should never be overlooked.



C.J. MOSELEY

2 CINCINNATI BENGALS 2014 RECORD: 10-5-1

OFFENSE: The Bengals have to answer a pressing question: Can QB Andy Dalton win in the playoffs? Cincinnati is stacked at running back with Jeremy Hill (1,124 yards) and Giovani Bernard (680 yards in 13 games). And wide receiver A.J. Green poses one of the biggest deep threats in the NFL. But Dalton has lost in the first round of the playoffs in each of the last four years. Will this be the year he clears that hurdle? **(A)**

DEFENSE: Cincinnati's defense was rocky last season, starting the year with three strong performances before giving up 27 points or more in its next four games. The pass rush and run defense both need to improve to make the Bengals serious playoff contenders. **(C+)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . settle for a B instead of an A. Dalton has been a solid regular-season quarterback, but Bengals fans have to be worried that he's hit his ceiling.



A.J. GREEN

3 PITTSBURGH STEELERS 2014 RECORD: 11-5

OFFENSE: Pittsburgh has a solid offensive line, a two-time Super Bowl winner at quarterback (Ben Roethlisberger), and one of the best wide receivers in the game, Antonio Brown (13 TDs, 1,698 yards). But running back Le'Veon Bell (1,361 yards) will miss the first three games due to a suspension. **(B+)**

DEFENSE: Pittsburgh, a franchise known for its defense, watched that unit struggle in 2014, finishing just 18th in yards allowed. The Steelers used three of their first four draft picks to begin righting the ship. Longtime fan favorite defensive backs Ike Taylor and Troy Polamalu retired, so it's time for the new guard to take over. But an immediate fix is unlikely. **(C+)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . forget their homework. The Steelers are extremely talented on offense, but the defense is young. Mistakes will be made early on, but if Pittsburgh can rally past them, the playoffs could be in sight.



ANTONIO BROWN

4 CLEVELAND BROWNS 2014 RECORD: 7-9

OFFENSE: It never seems to get any easier for Cleveland. Stud wide receiver Josh Gordon is suspended for the year. Johnny Manziel, a first-round pick in the 2014 draft, is not developing into the franchise quarterback that Cleveland had hoped for. Former Buccaneers signal-caller Josh McCown is in at quarterback — and exciting no one. **(D+)**

DEFENSE: Led by Pro Bowl cornerback Joe Haden, Cleveland's secondary was solid in 2014, and the Browns are working to improve the defense as a whole. Cleveland picked tackle Danny Shelton 12th overall in the 2015 draft and hopes the D can make up for the offense's shortcomings. **(B-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . be held back another year. The Browns have a plethora of questions and no answers. The endless quarterback shuffle continues, and unless Manziel somehow turns it around, there's no savior in sight.



JOE HADEN

AFC EAST

1

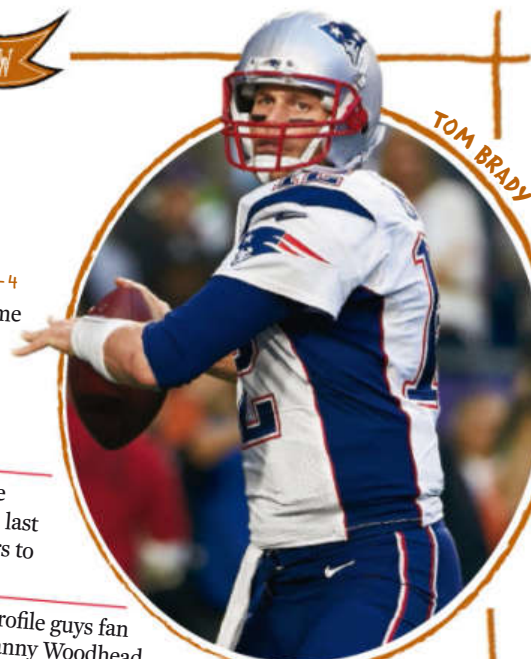
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

2014 RECORD: 12-4

OFFENSE: Every off-season, New England coach Bill Belichick lets big-name players walk. Fans fret, Belichick finds replacements, and by December, all is forgotten. The Patriots said goodbye to running backs Shane Vereen and Stevan Ridley, but as long as tight end Rob Gronkowski and quarterback Tom Brady are available for the majority of the season, the defending Super Bowl champs will be back in the playoffs. **(A-)**

DEFENSE: Belichick always seems to find a way to keep opponents off the scoreboard, but it's hard to believe the Patriots' defense will be as good as last season. The biggest challenge for New England is finding the right players to replace defensive backs Darrelle Revis, Brandon Browner, and Kyle Arrington. **(B-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . befriend the cool new kid. The Pats have a knack for making low-profile guys fan favorites: Brady, wideout Julian Edelman, cornerback Malcolm Butler, and running back Danny Woodhead.



TOM BRADY

2

BUFFALO BILLS

2014 RECORD: 9-7

OFFENSE: The Bills brought in running back LeSean McCoy (one of the top playmakers in the league), tight end Charles Clay, and wide receiver Percy Harvin. That's the good news. The bad news? Buffalo's three quarterback options — EJ Manuel, Matt Cassel, and Tyrod Taylor — are somehow all equally uninspiring. **(B-)**

DEFENSE: New coach Rex Ryan has a reputation for making headlines and building solid defenses. The talent is already in place in Buffalo — the Bills ranked fourth in total defense last season — so Ryan can focus on honing his group into the best defense in the league. **(A)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . .

finally graduate. The Bills haven't made the playoffs since 1999, but if Buffalo can ride McCoy and the defense, limit turnovers, and get any semblance of reliable play under center, this should finally be the year.



EJ MANUEL

3

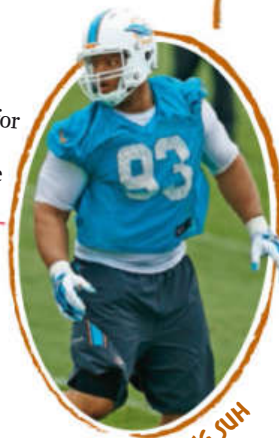
MIAMI DOLPHINS

2014 RECORD: 8-8

OFFENSE: The Dolphins revamped their receiving corps, drafting DeVante Parker, trading for Kenny Stills (63 catches for the Saints), and signing Greg Jennings (59 receptions for the Vikings). Quarterback Ryan Tannehill, who threw for 4,045 yards last year, will have to adapt to his new crew, but the overhaul looks like a smart move that will help Miami spread the ball around. **(B)**

DEFENSE: Miami hit the free-agent market hard this off-season and signed the biggest name available, former Detroit defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh (8½ sacks). The Dolphins' defensive line will be one of the best in the NFL, but it will have to play flawlessly to carry an otherwise average defense. **(B-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . put together a solid group project. The gap between the Dolphins and the Bills is a narrow one. If Buffalo's offense sputters, look for Miami to contend for second place — and a wild card spot.



NDAMUKONG SUH

4

NEW YORK JETS

2014 RECORD: 4-12

OFFENSE: The Jets' never-ending quarterback problem continues into another year. Geno Smith (13 TDs, 13 interceptions) will attempt to shake off the inconsistency that's plagued his career thus far. The team has decent depth at running back and added former Bears star wide receiver Brandon Marshall. **(C+)**

DEFENSE: New York has a top-notch line already in place and added Leonard Williams with the sixth overall pick in the 2015 draft. The linebacking corps is a weak link, but the secondary will see a major upgrade with the return of cornerbacks Darrelle Revis (from the Patriots) and Antonio Cromartie (from the Cardinals). **(B+)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . get recess taken away because one person messes up. Simply put, the Jets need a solid quarterback. They haven't had one in years and won't be able to compete in the AFC East until somebody — Smith, former Bills QB Ryan Fitzpatrick, or someone else — demonstrates ability under center.



LEONARD WILLIAMS

AFC SOUTH

1

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

2014 RECORD: 11-5

OFFENSE: Andrew Luck broke Peyton Manning's single-season franchise passing record with 4,761 yards last year. Adding wide receiver Andre Johnson (85 catches for the Texans) to stars T.Y. Hilton and Coby Fleener could have Luck pushing for 5,000 yards. New running back Frank Gore may be 32, but he had a 1,106-yard season for San Francisco last year, which gives Luck a new luxury. He has never played alongside a back who has rushed for more than 815 yards. **(A)**

DEFENSE: Pro Bowl linebacker D'Qwell Jackson and cornerback Vontae Davis lead an Indy unit that ranked No. 11 in total defense last season. Former

Pro Bowl linebacker Robert Mathis is also expected to return after missing last season with an Achilles injury. **(B)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . ace their AP exams. The brainy Luck is a Stanford graduate who is adept at passing whatever tests come his way.



ANDREW LUCK

2

HOUSTON TEXANS

2014 RECORD: 9-7

OFFENSE: Running back Arian Foster (1,246 yards, eight TDs) had a nice bounce-back season after missing half of 2013 with injuries, but questions still remain at quarterback. The Texans signed Brian Hoyer (3,326 yards with Cleveland) to try to fill the role and added wide receivers Cecil Shorts (53 catches for the Jaguars) and Nate Washington (40 receptions for the Titans). If Hoyer pans out, Houston has all the pieces it needs for a playoff run. **(B-)**

DEFENSE: The Texans feature the best defensive player in all of football: defensive end J.J. Watt (20½ sacks). Houston was 10th against the run but struggled at times against the pass. To fix that, the Texans picked up Wake Forest cornerback Kevin Johnson in the first round. The return of defensive end Jadeveon Clowney, who missed 12 games as a rookie after being the top pick in 2014, could help take Houston to the next level. **(A-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . take your lunch money. Watt & Co. are a nasty bunch.



J.J. WATT

3

TENNESSEE TITANS

2014 RECORD: 2-14

OFFENSE: Tennessee did not have a quarterback throw for more than 1,500 yards last season. So the Titans drafted Oregon's Marcus Mariota (4,454 yards, 42 TDs, 770 rushing yards, 15 rushing TDs) to be the team's franchise QB. In the second round, the team also added troubled but talented wide receiver Doris Green-Beckham, who sat out the 2014 season. There is plenty of work still to be done, but the Titans finally seem to have some direction. **(C)**

DEFENSE: Tennessee's defense was just plain bad last year, especially against the run. The Titans allowed 137.2 yards per game; only Cleveland was worse. Tennessee brought in several players to rebuild the defense, including former Pro Bowl linebacker Brian Orakpo. However, it may be some time before we really see any results. **(D)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . answer one question right and then not talk for the rest of the year. The Titans have the talent to show flashes of brilliance, but they are facing a long rebuilding process.



MARCUS MARIOTA

4

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

2014 RECORD: 3-13

OFFENSE: The Jaguars had the second worst offense in football last season and struggled to find answers down the stretch. First-round pick Blake Bortles threw 17 interceptions and only 11 TDs, and the leading rusher was Denard Robinson, a former college QB who gained just 582 yards. Alabama back T.J. Yeldon (979 yards, 11 TDs in college) and Pro Bowl tight end Julius Thomas (489 yards, 12 TDs with Denver) will help, but several question marks remain. **(C-)**

DEFENSE: Jacksonville drafted Florida defensive end Dante Fowler Jr. to fortify its porous defense. But only a day into his first NFL rookie camp, Fowler tore his ACL and will be out for the season. That's especially troubling because the Jaguars picked up few defensive difference makers in free agency. **(D)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . end up in summer school. The Jaguars struggled mightily last season, and very little has changed. It will be at least one more year before positive results can be seen.



DENARD ROBINSON

AFC WEST

1

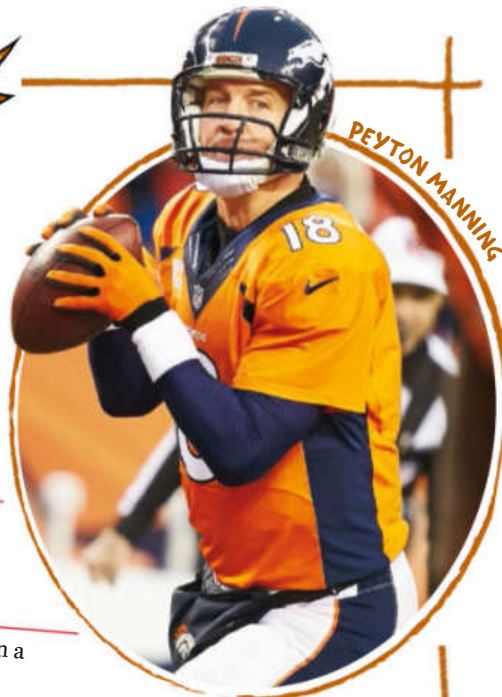
DENVER BRONCOS

2014 RECORD: 12-4

OFFENSE: Can anything slow Peyton Manning (4,727 yards, 39 TDs)? Despite turning 39 in March, the Broncos' QB is still one of the most productive players in football. He is surrounded by a talented group of receivers, including Demaryius Thomas (1,619 yards, 11 TDs) and Emmanuel Sanders (1,404 yards, nine TDs). However, the Broncos will have to find a way to replace tight end Julius Thomas, who led the team in touchdowns, with 12. **(A-)**

DEFENSE: The Broncos ranked No. 3 in total defense last season, and there is no reason to think that much will change. Denver added elite coordinator Wade Phillips from the Texans. Phillips runs a 3-4 scheme, which should take advantage of both his Pro Bowl linebackers: Von Miller and DeMarcus Ware. **(B+)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . earn a perfect attendance award. Manning has not missed the playoffs in a healthy season since 2001.



PEYTON MANNING

2

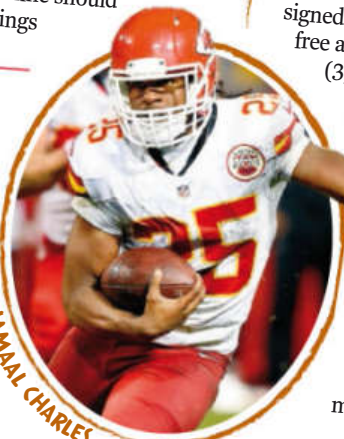
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

2014 RECORD: 9-7

OFFENSE: The Chiefs have some nice pieces, but the offense as a whole has struggled. Running back Jamaal Charles had his third straight 1,000-yard season. QB Alex Smith (3,265 yards, 18 TDs) had good stats but somehow managed to go a whole season without throwing a touchdown pass to a wide receiver. The Chiefs hope adding Pro Bowl wideout Jeremy Maclin can help the offense evolve. **(B)**

DEFENSE: Do not try to pass the ball against Kansas City; it will not end well. The Chiefs allowed QBs to complete only 58.3% of their passes and should be even tougher after adding cornerback Marcus Peters in the draft. But while the Kansas City D was tough against the pass, it struggled against the run. Another year of development on the defensive line should help smooth things over. **(B+)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . make a new best friend. Chiefs fans will be delighted to see Maclin pull down touchdown catches.



JAMAAL CHARLES

3

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

2014 RECORD: 9-7

OFFENSE: Philip Rivers was once again one of the most productive quarterbacks in football last season, and help in the ground game might be on the way. The Chargers drafted record-breaking Wisconsin running back Melvin Gordon (2,587 yards, 29 TDs last year) to revitalize one of the worst rushing attacks in the NFL. If he performs, the Chargers could be scary on offense. **(B+)**

DEFENSE: The San Diego defense is consistent, but it's missing playmakers. The Chargers ranked in the bottom five in both sacks and interceptions last season. But safety Eric Weddle earned All-Pro honors for the fifth time and cornerback Jason Verrett proved to be a very solid contributor as a rookie. **(B-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . make A's on all the assignments and blow the final exam. The Chargers have the talent to compete, but they always seem to finish just shy of the playoffs.



ERIC WEDDLE

4

OAKLAND RAIDERS

2014 RECORD: 3-13

OFFENSE: Oakland had the worst offense in football last year, but the team addressed the problem in the off-season. The Raiders drafted Alabama's Amari Cooper (1,727 receiving yards, 16 TDs) with the No. 4 pick and signed wide receiver Michael Crabtree and running back Trent Richardson in free agency. But the key to the Oakland offense will be QB Derek Carr (3,270 yards, 21 TDs), who needs to develop now that he has a year of experience with the Raiders under his belt. **(C-)**

DEFENSE: The team drafted linebacker Khalil Mack in 2014 to fortify its defense. He performed admirably and finished third in voting for AP Defensive Rookie of the Year. This year Oakland used its second pick on Florida State defensive end Mario Edwards Jr. If he can follow in Mack's footsteps, the Raiders might actually see a light at the end of the tunnel for the first time in years. **(C+)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . finally pass fourth grade. The Raiders haven't had a winning season since 2002, but they are poised to make substantial improvements this year.



AMARI COOPER

HALFTIME!

TAKE A LITTLE BREAK
WITH THESE FUN ACTIVITIES.

Play on Words

Unscramble the four words below and add up the letters circled to reveal a particular football play.

SASP



UNR



TUTSN



TEUNRR



The answer: _____



Get the Picture

The sounds represented here add up to NFL team names. See if you can figure out which ones they are.

1.  +  +  - n = ?

2.  + an +  = ?

3.  - D +  + S = ?



The Completely True Story of How the _____ Won Super Bowl 50!

team name

Grab a friend and write down his or her answers in the blanks. The zanier the better!

T

hings started poorly for the champions. In Week 1s, they suffered a heartbreaking loss when their quarterback slipped on a _____, which had somehow ended up on the field. Things

noun

went from bad to worse when their top wide receiver's _____ fell off and they signed a

body part

_____ -foot tall replacement. Another player missed _____ games when he pulled his _____

number **number** **body part**

while washing his pet _____. It was enough to cause the coach to quit and return to his first love:

animal

_____ collecting.

noun

Still, their _____ fans stuck with the team. And by the end of the season, the players looked like a

adjective

pack of fierce _____ on the field. Their first playoff game ended in _____ fashion.

plural animal **adjective**

With their opponent kicking a field goal to win the game, a sudden gust of wind blew through the stadium, carrying the ball all the way to the _____.

place

The Super Bowl ended even more dramatically. With just _____ seconds left on the clock, Coach called for

number

_____ , their best trick play. After the snap, the running back

adjective **noun** **letter** **number**

hid the ball in his _____. The confused defense then let him walk right into the end zone,

football equipment

where he proceeded to do a touchdown dance during which he imitated a _____.

noun

Who can forget the announcer's now infamuous call? "_____ ! I'll be a _____'s

exclamation **animal**

uncle! That is the craziest play in the history of the Super Bowl!"

SCOUTING REPORTS

NFC NORTH

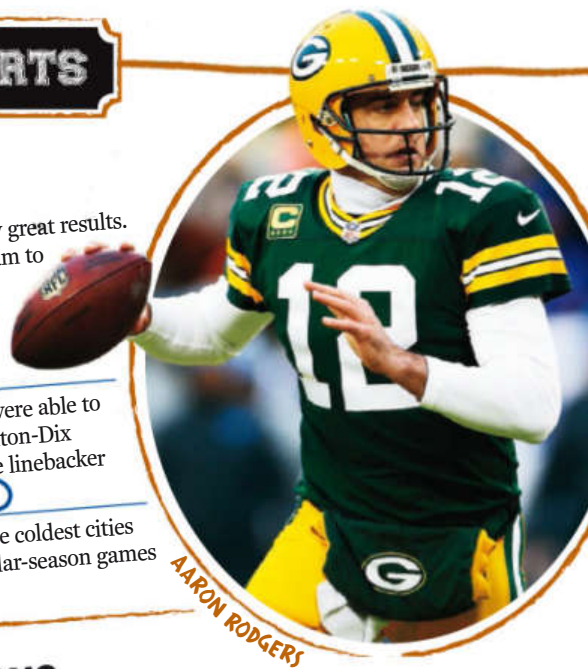
1

GREEN BAY PACKERS 2014 RECORD: 12-4

OFFENSE: In the NFL, having a star quarterback can mean consistently great results. That's been the case in Green Bay, where Aaron Rodgers has led the team to six straight playoffs. He was great again last year, throwing for 4,381 yards and 38 TDs and catapulting wide receiver Jordy Nelson (1,519 yards, 13 TDs) into the NFL's elite. Running back Eddie Lacy (1,139 yards) will try for his third straight 1,000-yard season. **(A)**

DEFENSE: Green Bay's D allowed plenty of yards, but the Packers were able to hold opponents to less than 22 points per game. Safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix (92 tackles) was an immediate contributor as a rookie, and outside linebacker Julius Peppers (44 tackles, seven sacks) shone in his first season with the Packers. **(B)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . pelt a rival in the face with a snowball. Green Bay is one of the coldest cities in football, which is quite an advantage for the Packers. They have lost just seven regular-season games at Lambeau Field in the past six years.



AARON RODGERS

2 CHICAGO BEARS

2014 RECORD: 5-11

OFFENSE: Chicago lost former Pro Bowl wide receiver Brandon Marshall, but the Bears believe they have found his replacement in No. 7 pick Kevin White. During his senior year at West Virginia, he caught 109 passes for 1,447 yards and 10 touchdowns. He joins a talented offense that also features former Pro Bowl running back Matt Forte (1,846 yards from scrimmage, 10 TDs) and quarterback Jay Cutler (3,812 yards, 28 TDs). **(B+)**

DEFENSE: The Bears' defense was pitiful last season, ranking 30th in yards allowed. The unit was especially bad against the pass, giving up 264.4 yards per game. However, new head coach John Fox has a reputation for building stout defenses: His Broncos had the league's third-best unit in 2014. Chicago will also receive a boost from former Pro Bowl safety Antrel Rolle, who signed as a free agent. **(C)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . surprise the teacher by improving. The Bears were a disaster last year but should find some stability with Fox.



MATT FORTE

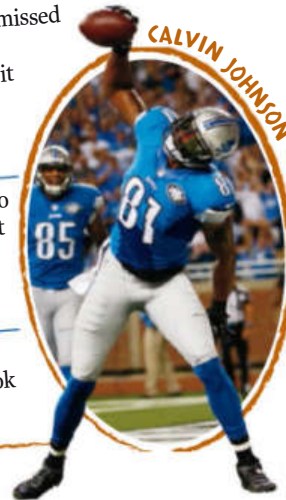
3 DETROIT LIONS

2014 RECORD: 11-5

OFFENSE: Detroit has some elite players, but its offense is becoming predictable. Wide receiver Calvin Johnson (1,077 yards) missed three games and had his least productive season since 2009, but Golden Tate (99 catches, 1,331 yards) helped pick up the slack. Detroit now must decide whether running back Joique Bell (860 yards, 3.9 yards per carry) is the guy or if rookie Ameer Abdullah (1,611 yards, 19 TDs for Nebraska) is ready to contribute. **(C+)**

DEFENSE: The Lions will have to find a new identity now that All-Pro tackle Ndamukong Suh has left to join the Dolphins. Detroit brought in former Ravens Pro Bowler Haloti Ngata (31 tackles) to try to fill Suh's shoes, but it has been a couple years since the 31-year-old has been a true difference maker. **(B)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . be the bully who changes his ways. Suh is one of the scariest players in the league. Without him, the Lions look much tamer — and much more beatable.



CALVIN JOHNSON

4 MINNESOTA VIKINGS

2014 RECORD: 7-9

OFFENSE: The Vikings have a chance to be a surprise team in the NFC. Minnesota struggled through last season after losing running back Adrian Peterson (1,266 yards rushing in 2013), but he is expected to be back for 2015. Quarterback Teddy Bridgewater (2,919 yards, 14 TDs in 12 starts) showed promise as a rookie, and he should improve drastically with the arrival of wide receiver Mike Wallace (862 yards, 10 TDs). **(C)**

DEFENSE: Minnesota added a pair of All-America selections with its first two picks in the draft. Cornerback Trae Waynes and linebacker Eric Kendricks should both be ready to compete for playing time right away, bringing some star power to a unit that was steady but unspectacular in 2014. **(B)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . look for a big friend to protect them on the playground. Vikings QBs were sacked 51 times, fifth-most in the NFL. Minnesota can't afford to let Bridgewater take too many hits this season.



TEDDY BRIDGEWATER

NFC EAST

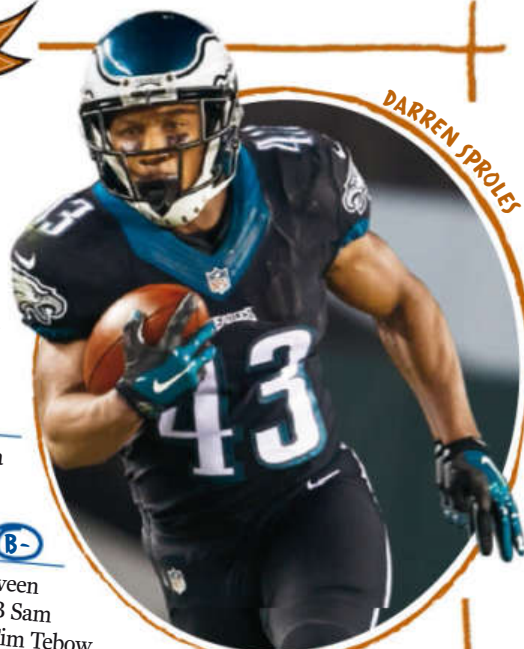
1 PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

2014 RECORD: 10-6

OFFENSE: If all goes according to plan, Philadelphia will have one of the trickiest offenses in the NFL. Coach Chip Kelly spent the off-season wheeling and dealing, and Philadelphia now has the top backfield around: DeMarco Murray (1,845 yards with the Cowboys), Darren Sproles (a Pro Bowl punt returner), and Ryan Matthews (1,255 yards for the Chargers in 2013). **(A-)**

DEFENSE: The Eagles were held back by a sloppy secondary. Kelly's been on a mission to fix that. Signing cornerback Byron Maxwell away from Seattle's Legion of Boom and trading for former Bills linebacker Kiko Alonso — assuming he's healthy — will immediately make the Eagles' defense better. **(B-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . get an A — or study the wrong chapter and fail the test. The line between genius and mad man is a thin one, and Kelly toes it. His success hinges on former St. Louis QB Sam Bradford. If he doesn't come through, Kelly will be stuck with Mark Sanchez. Or maybe even Tim Tebow.



DARREN SPROLES

2 DALLAS COWBOYS

2014 RECORD: 12-4

OFFENSE: The Cowboys' offensive line is the best in football, and it moved mountains in 2014. QB Tony Romo (3,705 yards, 34 TDs) should pick apart defenses again this year. Feature running backs are hard to come by, so it remains to be seen how badly the loss of DeMarco Murray, the NFL's leading rusher, will affect the team. **(A-)**

DEFENSE: Dallas isn't going to win by leaning on its defense. Like last year, the unit just needs to be good enough to keep the pressure off the offense and let Romo and top targets Dez Bryant and Jason Witten go to work. Look for defensive lineman Tyrone Crawford to break out this season. **(B-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . bring home another solid report card. The Cowboys have a great offensive foundation, and it would take a true disaster for them to mess it all up. But that doesn't mean they have the talent to overcome Murray's new team, the Eagles, and win the division.



TONY ROMO

3 NEW YORK GIANTS

2014 RECORD: 6-10

OFFENSE: Will Odell Beckham Jr. stay healthy? Can fellow wide receiver Victor Cruz make a full recovery from the knee injury that ended his 2014 season in Week 6? Will QB Eli Manning play like he did last year, when he threw for 4,410 yards, or like he did two years ago, when he threw 27 interceptions? In other words, will the G-Men be excitingly dangerous or frustratingly dull? **(B)**

DEFENSE: Steve Spagnuolo was defensive coordinator for the Giants when they won the Super Bowl in 2008, and he's holding a clipboard on the New York sideline again. That bodes well for the Giants, who finished 29th in the league in yards allowed last year. **(C-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . get C's on the quizzes but still ace the final. The Giants' defense is going to take time to fix. That said, if Manning can channel the old magic, maybe the Giants can ride the chaos into the playoffs with a 9-7 record. It's a specialty of coach Tom Coughlin's.



ODELL BECKHAM JR.

4 WASHINGTON REDSKINS

2014 RECORD: 4-12

OFFENSE: Three years ago, QB Robert Griffin III led Washington to 10 wins and the NFC East title. Griffin has failed to reach those heights since, suffering injuries and getting benched. If Griffin (four TDs, six interceptions in nine games) can somehow get back to his rookie level, Washington has a chance to win some games. **(C-)**

DEFENSE: The Redskins have more talent on defense than in past years. Free safety Dashon Goldson (acquired from the Buccaneers) and cornerback Chris Culliver (signed from the 49ers) will vastly improve the secondary. And the Redskins selected Mississippi State's Preston Smith, whom they'll play as a linebacker, in the second round of the draft. **(C+)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . remain class clown. Plain and simple, Washington is outclassed by its NFC East competition. Without huge (and unexpected) gains on both sides of the ball, the Redskins will be stuck wallowing at the bottom of the division for the third season in a row.



ROBERT GRIFFIN III

SCOUTING REPORTS

NFC SOUTH

1

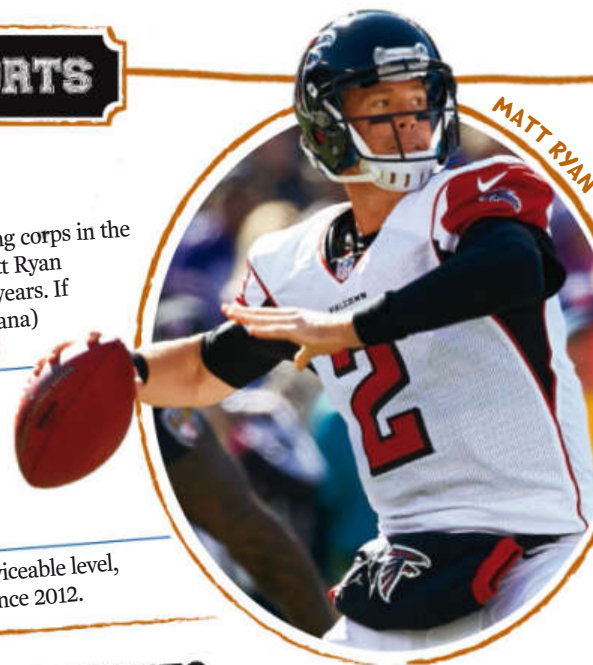
ATLANTA FALCONS 2014 RECORD: 6-10

OFFENSE: The Falcons welcome back one of the most enviable receiving corps in the NFL — and the pressure-proof guy throwing to them, quarterback Matt Ryan (4,694 yards). But the ground game has been very shaky the past two years. If third-round pick Tevin Coleman (2,036 yards rushing last year at Indiana) performs right away, the Falcons' offense will be truly fearsome. (A-)

DEFENSE: When you're the worst in the league, the only place to go is up. The Falcons are poised to do just that. Dan Quinn takes over as head coach after running Seattle's top-ranked defense for two years. Atlanta practically stole Clemson linebacker

Vic Beasley (33 career sacks) with the eighth pick in the draft. And second-rounder Jalen Collins from LSU can be an impact player as a rookie corner. (B-)

MOST LIKELY TO . . . excel with a new tutor. If Quinn can raise the defense to a serviceable level, Ryan's high-flying offense will lift the Falcons back into the playoffs for the first time since 2012.



MATT RYAN

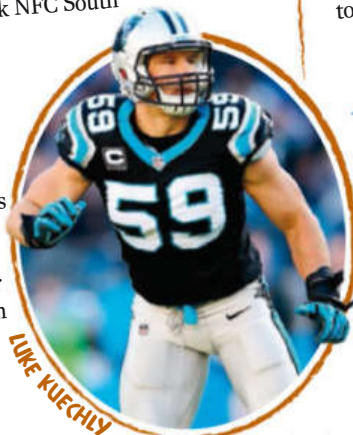
2 CAROLINA PANTHERS

2014 RECORD: 7-8-1

OFFENSE: The Panthers showed their potential last season, winning their last five games in a row (including a wild-card game) before losing to the Seahawks. After struggling behind last year's offensive line, quarterback Cam Newton (3,127 yards) will look to new additions Jonathan Martin and Michael Oher to steady the unit and give him some help. (B-)

DEFENSE: The key to Carolina's defense is two-time All-Pro linebacker Luke Kuechly (107 tackles). At just 24 years old, Kuechly is the best middle linebacker in the NFL, the commander of Carolina's defense, and one of the smartest players on the field. (A-)

MOST LIKELY TO . . . grow up and leave their awkward stage behind. The Panthers won back-to-back NFC South championships as a wildly inconsistent team. (Last year they became the fourth team to make the playoffs with a losing record.) But this could be the year they finally put in a complete season.



LUKE KUECHLY

3

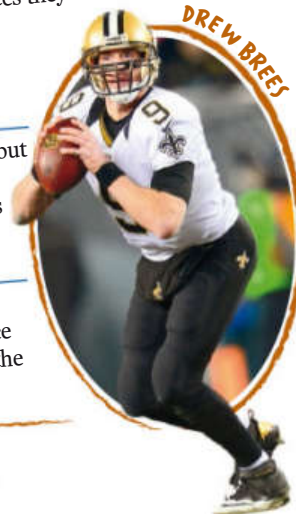
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

2014 RECORD: 7-9

OFFENSE: The Saints traded the team's top two receivers, tight end Jimmy Graham and wideout Kenny Stills, to pick up draft choices they used on defensive players. Mark Ingram and former Bills running back C.J. Spiller could form a quality backfield if they're healthy, but until QB Drew Brees finds a new pair of top targets, it's hard to see New Orleans becoming more dangerous. (B-)

DEFENSE: The D was 31st in the NFL in yards allowed last season, but the Saints are banking on it improving greatly. New Orleans has simplified defensive coordinator Rob Ryan's scheme, made changes to the staff, and filled a big need by signing former Patriots cornerback Brandon Browner. (C)

MOST LIKELY TO . . . flunk math. The Saints' intention is clear: Lean on the playmaking ability of Brees (4,952 yards), and sacrifice some offense to better the defense. It's a bold strategy, but unless the defense makes unexpected strides, the math just doesn't add up.



DREW BRES

4

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

2014 RECORD: 2-14

OFFENSE: Tampa Bay is betting that QB Jameis Winston will be the future of the franchise. That's a scary place to put your money, even though Winston only lost one game in two seasons with Florida State. He's a proven winner, but he threw 18 interceptions as a sophomore and brings a big bag of off-field issues with him. (C-)

DEFENSE: Tampa Bay made several moves on defense to give support to their key pieces, defensive tackle Gerald McCoy and linebacker Lavonte David. But none of the pickups were exactly splashy. The defense will be a bit better than last year, when it was terrible. (C-)

MOST LIKELY TO . . . get sent to detention. The Bucs will be as good or as bad as their rookie quarterback is. If Winston gets into off-the-field trouble — which has to be a legitimate concern — or can't live up to the hype, Tampa is back to square one.



JAMEIS WINSTON

NFC WEST

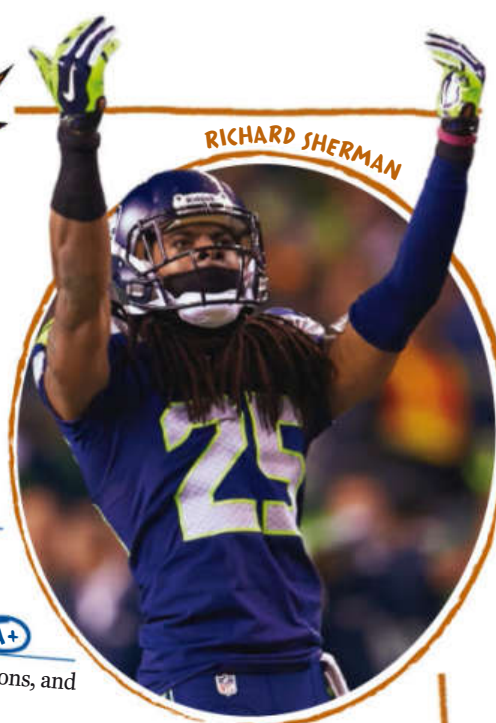
1 SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

2014 RECORD: 12-4

OFFENSE: Seattle's offense may not be flashy, but it gets the job done. QB Russell Wilson (3,475 yards, 20 TDs) has set himself apart as a game-managing signal-caller, and running back Marshawn Lynch (1,306 yards, 13 TDs) can make a convincing case that he's the best in the league. That the Seahawks snapped up consensus All-America wide receiver Tyler Lockett (1,515 yards, 11 TDs) in the third round is simply unfair. **(A-)**

DEFENSE: Everyone wanted to announce the demise of the Legion of Boom last season; all were mistaken. The Seahawks' D held opponents to a paltry 267 yards and 15.9 points per game, by far the best in the league in both categories. Cornerback Richard Sherman leads one of the best secondaries of the past decade. **(A+)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . succeed. The Seahawks have made the Super Bowl in back-to-back seasons, and there is no reason to think anything is about to change.



RICHARD SHERMAN

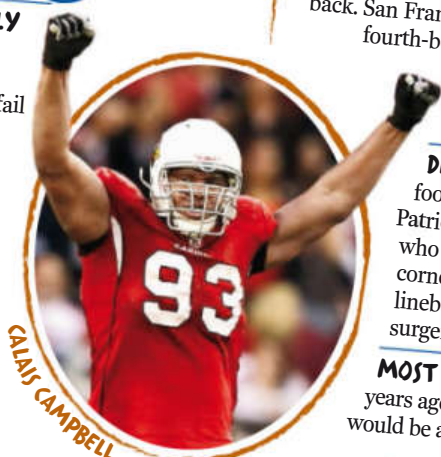
2 ARIZONA CARDINALS

2014 RECORD: 11-5

OFFENSE: As soon as QB Carson Palmer went down with an injury in Week 10 of last season, the offense collapsed. With Drew Stanton or Ryan Lindley at the helm, the Cardinals averaged a pathetic 12.4 points over their last seven games. The running game did them no favors: Andre Ellington was the leading rusher with 660 yards. The Cardinals were undefeated when scoring more than 20 points; that only happened seven times last season. **(C-)**

DEFENSE: Arizona's defense can be credited with virtually every one of its 11 victories last season. In those wins, the Cardinals allowed an average of only 14 points. End Calais Campbell (seven sacks) was a disruptive force, and safety Rashad Johnson made plays all over the field. **(A)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . ace math and science, but fail English and history. The Cards are dominant at one thing (defense) but struggle with everything else.



CALAIS CAMPBELL

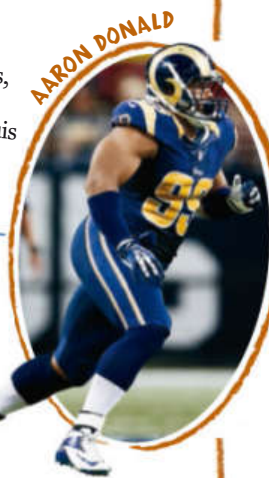
3 ST. LOUIS RAMS

2014 RECORD: 6-10

OFFENSE: The Rams acquired QB Nick Foles (2,163 yards, 13 TDs in eight games with the Eagles), who will try to revitalize an offense that finished 28th in the league in yardage. St. Louis also drafted running back Todd Gurley — who averaged 7.4 yards per carry for Georgia before tearing his ACL — with the No. 10 pick. The talent is starting to arrive, but can anyone stay healthy? **(C)**

DEFENSE: The Rams welcome back all 11 starters on defense and have added former Lions defensive tackle Nick Fairley to the mix. Tackle Aaron Donald (48 tackles, nine sacks) made the Pro Bowl in his first season and defensive end Chris Long should be back to his usual dominance after recovering from ankle surgery. **(A-)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . ask you to sign their cast. The Rams have always been injury-prone, and the addition of Gurley only adds to the perception that the team is fragile.



AARON DONALD

4 SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

2014 RECORD: 8-8

OFFENSE: QB Colin Kaepernick's production has gone up steadily since he took over as the starter in 2012. But last year the team took a big step back. San Francisco had only the 20th-best offense in the NFL despite boasting the fourth-best rushing attack. Now, with running back Frank Gore (1,106 yards) gone in free agency, Kaepernick really has to step up. He'll have Torrey Smith (49 receptions with the Ravens) to help balance the passing game. **(C)**

DEFENSE: The San Francisco defense, one of the best in football, is losing players at an alarming rate. Linebackers Patrick Willis and Chris Borland were among several 49ers who retired suddenly this off-season. In addition, both starting cornerbacks left in free agency. San Francisco has to hope linebacker NaVorro Bowman has recovered well from knee surgery, or the losses might be too much to bear. **(B)**

MOST LIKELY TO . . . brag about the good old days. Three years ago the 49ers were NFC champs. This year, a .500 record would be a success.



COLIN KAEPRNICK

JOB SWAP

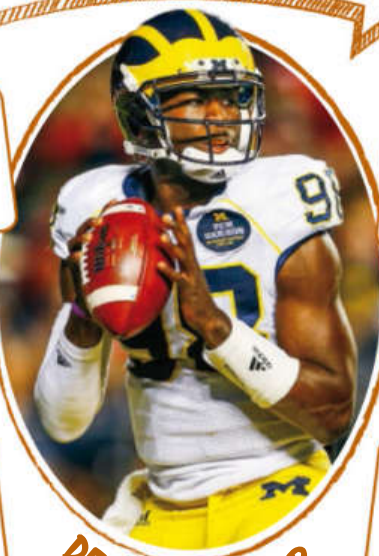
THESE NFL ROOKIES WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO CATCH ON AS PROS IF THEY CAN ADAPT TO PLAYING A DIFFERENT POSITION. By Lauren Shute

Made a good Michigan quarterback because ...

MIND GAMES Suffering a season-ending injury as a freshman was instructive. "It forced him to focus on the QB role instead of relying on his physical skills," says former U of M offensive coordinator Doug Nussmeier.

VERSATILITY Gardner lined up at wideout from time to time at Michigan. That experience helped him under center, since he had to learn receivers' duties and what they expect from the quarterback.

POSITIVE OUTLOOK As the winner of Michigan's 2014-15 Sportsmanship Award, Gardner showed he could lead those around him, inspiring people both on and off the field.



DEVIN GARDNER

Will be a good NFL wide receiver because ...

BIG-STAGE PRACTICE Loud crowds in packed stadiums? Not a problem. Gardner consistently played in front of 100,000 fans at Michigan's Big House. Masses of boisterous fans won't intimidate this rookie.

VERSATILITY Though his primary role will be to catch the football, Gardner could make a valuable scout team quarterback, helping his team prepare for opponents every week.

SIZE NFL defenders are bigger and stronger than the ones Gardner faced in college, but since he is a towering 6'4" and 216 pounds, he should be able to endure his share of hits.

Made a good Auburn quarterback because ...

DUAL THREAT In 2013 Marshall became the fourth QB in SEC history to rush for at least 1,000 yards. He also threw for 1,976 yards, leading Auburn to a 12-2 record and a spot in the national championship game.

FIT THE SYSTEM Marshall's athleticism and decision-making made him perfect for Auburn's high-powered, option-based offense. He energized the team when running, throwing, or handing off.

"IT" FACTOR Marshall has a knack for clutch plays. His most famous was a Hail Mary to beat Georgia in 2013, a play known as the Prayer at Jordan-Hare (Auburn's stadium).



NICK MARSHALL

Will be a good NFL cornerback because ...

EXPERIENCE Coming out of high school, programs coveted Marshall more as a defensive back than a QB. He played at corner and on special teams at two college stops before Auburn, then switched to QB.

ADDS DEPTH Marshall's ability to play more than one position will help him stick on a 53-man NFL roster. In addition to playing defensive back, he can return punts, play backup QB, or be a slot receiver.

QUIET LEADER "Nick is humble and cares about people," says Auburn offensive coordinator Rhett Lashlee. "He's not one of those guys trying to be in the spotlight."

OTHERS WHO HAVE MADE THE SWITCH

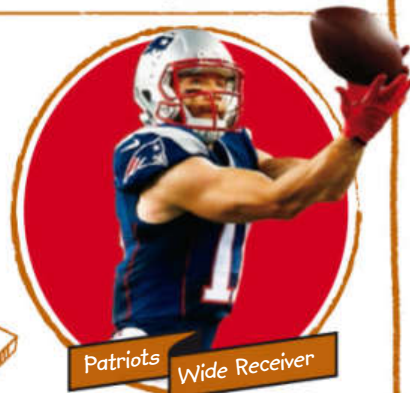
DENARD ROBINSON

At Michigan, Robinson set the NCAA record for career rushing yards by a quarterback (4,495). The 6-foot 197-pounder didn't project as a QB at the next level, however, and went to the Jaguars in the fifth round of the 2013 draft. Jacksonville moved Robinson to running back, where he had made two starts for the Wolverines. After playing sparingly as a rookie, he led the Jags with 512 rushing yards last year and will contend for the team's No. 1 running back spot this season.



JULIAN EDELMAN

You probably remember the trick play in the Patriots' playoff game against the Ravens last season: Edelman tossed a 51-yard pass to fellow wide receiver Danny Amendola for a touchdown. It shouldn't have been a complete surprise. At Kent State, Edelman threw for 4,997 yards and 30 TDs in three seasons. To continue his career, he moved to receiver and is now one of New England QB Tom Brady's favorite targets. (Edelman was the team's second leading receiver in 2014, with 972 yards.)



RANDALL COBB

Cobb excelled during his time at Kentucky, but not at any particular position. He caught passes, played quarterback in the Wildcat formation, and returned punts. So despite starting off his college career with a spot on the SEC All-Freshman team as a QB, Cobb was labeled a "tweener" at the professional level. He found his niche in Green Bay as a wide receiver. Last season he showcased his playmaking ability, putting up career highs in receptions (91), TDs (12), and receiving yards (1,287).



JASON PETERS

Peters is an expert at switching positions. At first glance, the 6'4", 328-pound Eagle appears to be a prototypical offensive lineman, but he's actually a relative newcomer to the position. He starred as a defensive lineman at Queen City (Texas) High, then switched to tight end for his redshirt freshman season at Arkansas. The Razorbacks used him primarily as a blocker; he made 28 catches in three years. Peters went undrafted, then slid over to offensive tackle. Since then, he's earned seven Pro Bowl nods.



SI'S
SIMPLE
TEAR-OUT
WILL
GUIDE
YOU
THROUGH
THE
FRENZY
OF DRAFT
DAY

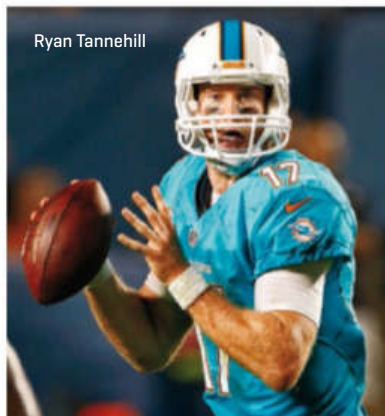


HOW THEY RANK

FANTASY
FOOTBALL
2015

Preparing for a fantasy football draft can be hard. You have to calculate, predict, rank, and re-rank. There are roster requirements, scoring settings, and your own position in the draft that all come into play. And, of course, you also have to coordinate your players' bye weeks. It's enough to almost make you want to skip the season before it even begins. Luckily, our rankings are here to save you a lot of time and headaches. With just the following pages and a pen, you can dominate your fantasy draft. Compiled with care by the experts at SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, this cheat sheet is your secret weapon.

RANK/PLAYER/POSITION/TEAM	BYE
1 Jamaal Charles RB Chiefs	9
2 Eddie Lacy RB Packers	7
3 Adrian Peterson RB Vikings	5
4 Matt Forte RB Bears	7
5 Marshawn Lynch RB Seahawks	9
6 Dez Bryant WR Cowboys	6
7 Le'Veon Bell RB Steelers	11
8 Antonio Brown WR Steelers	11
9 Demaryius Thomas WR Broncos	7
10 Calvin Johnson WR Lions	9
11 Jordy Nelson WR Packers	7
12 Julio Jones WR Falcons	10
13 Odell Beckham Jr. WR Giants	11
14 DeMarco Murray RB Eagles	8
15 Jeremy Hill RB Bengals	7
16 Rob Gronkowski TE Patriots	4
17 Arian Foster RB Texans	9
18 Aaron Rodgers QB Packers	7
19 Ashon Jeffery WR Bears	7
20 A.J. Green WR Bengals	7
21 LeSean McCoy RB Bills	8
22 Randall Cobb WR Packers	7
23 Alfred Morris RB Redskins	8
24 Lamar Miller RB Dolphins	5
25 Melvin Gordon RB Chargers	10
26 Mike Evans WR Buccaneers	6
27 C.J. Anderson RB Broncos	7
28 Andrew Luck QB Colts	10
29 T.Y. Hilton WR Colts	10
30 Mark Ingram RB Saints	11
31 Carlos Hyde RB 49ers	10
32 Todd Gurley RB Rams	6
33 Jimmy Graham TE Seahawks	9
34 Emmanuel Sanders WR Broncos	7
35 Justin Forsett RB Ravens	9
36 Frank Gore RB Colts	10
37 Kelvin Benjamin WR Panthers	5
38 Russell Wilson QB Seahawks	9
39 DeSean Jackson WR Redskins	8
40 DeAndre Hopkins WR Texans	9



Ryan Tannehill

41 Andre Johnson WR Colts	10
42 Jonathan Stewart RB Panthers	5
43 Latavius Murray RB Raiders	6
44 Brandin Cooks WR Saints	11
45 Martavis Bryant WR Steelers	11
46 Joique Bell RB Lions	9
47 Andre Ellington RB Cardinals	9
48 Jeremy Maclin WR Chiefs	9
49 Peyton Manning QB Broncos	7
50 Jordan Matthews WR Eagles	8
51 Travis Kelce TE Chiefs	9
52 Sammy Watkins WR Bills	8
53 Golden Tate WR Lions	9
54 Ben Roethlisberger QB Steelers	11
55 Matt Ryan QB Falcons	10
56 Greg Olsen TE Panthers	5
57 Giovani Bernard RB Bengals	7
58 Brandon Marshall WR Jets	5
59 Keenan Allen WR Chargers	10
60 C.J. Spiller RB Saints	11
61 LeGarrette Blount RB Patriots	4
62 Michael Floyd WR Cardinals	9
63 Drew Brees QB Saints	11
64 Rashad Jennings RB Giants	11
65 Tevin Coleman RB Falcons	10
66 Julian Edelman WR Patriots	4

67 Vincent Jackson WR Buccaneers	6
68 Kevin White WR Bears	7
69 Tom Brady QB Patriots	4
70 Amari Cooper WR Raiders	6
71 Ryan Tannehill QB Dolphins	5
72 T.J. Yeldon RB Jaguars	8
73 Martellus Bennett TE Bears	7
74 Shane Vereen RB Giants	11
75 Darren McFadden RB Cowboys	6
76 Roddy White WR Falcons	10
77 Victor Cruz WR Giants	11
78 Isaiah Crowell RB Browns	11
79 Jordan Cameron TE Dolphins	5
80 Mike Wallace WR Vikings	5
81 Torrey Smith WR 49ers	10
82 Chris Ivory RB Jets	5
83 Ryan Mathews RB Eagles	8
84 Eli Manning QB Giants	11
85 Tony Romo QB Cowboys	6
86 Cam Newton QB Panthers	5
87 Steve Smith WR Ravens	9
88 Charles Johnson WR Vikings	5
89 Jarvis Landry WR Dolphins	5
90 Allen Robinson WR Jaguars	8
91 Eric Decker WR Jets	5
92 Dwayne Allen TE Colts	10
93 Matthew Stafford QB Lions	9
94 Larry Fitzgerald WR Cardinals	9
95 Pierre Garçon WR Redskins	8
96 Kenny Stills WR Dolphins	5
97 Nelson Agholor WR Eagles	8
98 Bishop Sankey RB Titans	4
99 Ameer Abdullah RB Lions	9
100 Anquan Boldin WR 49ers	10
101 Delanie Walker TE Titans	4
102 Antonio Gates TE Chargers	10
103 Owen Daniels TE Broncos	7
104 Jay Cutler QB Bears	7
105 Justin Hunter WR Titans	4
106 Coby Fleener TE Colts	10
107 John Brown WR Cardinals	9
108 Montee Ball RB Broncos	7
109 Devonta Freeman RB Falcons	10
110 Marques Colston WR Saints	11
111 Julius Thomas TE Jaguars	8
112 Zach Ertz TE Eagles	8
113 Denard Robinson RB Jaguars	8
114 Joe Flacco QB Ravens	9
115 Percy Harvin WR Bills	8
116 Brandon LaFell WR Patriots	4
117 Reggie Bush RB 49ers	10
118 Doug Martin RB Buccaneers	6
119 David Cobb RB Titans	4
120 Sam Bradford QB Eagles	8
121 Tre Mason RB Rams	6
122 Philip Rivers QB Chargers	10
123 Teddy Bridgewater QB Vikings	5
124 Kendall Wright WR Titans	4
125 Robert Griffin III QB Redskins	8
126 Brian Quick WR Rams	6



DeSean Jackson

RANK/PLAYER/POSITION/TEAM	BYE
127 Terrance West RB Browns	11
128 Jason Witten TE Cowboys	6
129 Colin Kaepernick QB 49ers	10
130 Charles Sims RB Buccaneers	6
131 Davante Adams WR Packers	7
132 Carson Palmer QB Cardinals	9
133 Charles Clay TE Bills	8
134 Terrance Williams WR Cowboys	6
135 Tyler Eifert TE Bengals	7
136 Cody Latimer WR Broncos	7
137 Marvin Jones WR Bengals	7
138 Alex Smith QB Chiefs	9
139 Andy Dalton QB Bengals	7
140 Doug Baldwin WR Seahawks	9
141 Donte Moncrief WR Colts	10



Knile Davis

142 Blake Bortles QB Jaguars	8
143 Fred Jackson RB Bills	8
144 Andre Williams RB Giants	11
145 Stevan Ridley RB Jets	5
146 Rueben Randle WR Giants	11
147 Nick Foles QB Rams	6
148 DeAngelo Williams RB Steelers	11
149 Theo Riddick RB Lions	9
150 Jay Ajayi RB Dolphins	5
151 Malcom Floyd WR Chargers	10
152 Seahawks Defense	9
153 Breshad Perriman WR Ravens	9
154 Josh Huff WR Eagles	8
155 DeVante Parker WR Dolphins	5
156 Austin Seferian-Jenkins TE Buccaneers	6
157 Kyle Rudolph TE Vikings	5
158 Lorenzo Taliaferro RB Ravens	9
159 Eric Ebron TE Lions	9
160 Dwayne Bowe WR Browns	11
161 Eddie Royal WR Bears	7
162 Khiry Robinson RB Saints	11
163 Jameis Winston QB Buccaneers	6
164 Roy Helu RB Raiders	6
165 Texans Defense	9

RANK/PLAYER/POSITION/TEAM	BYE
166 Michael Crabtree WR Raiders	6
167 Marcus Mariota QB Titans	4
168 Danny Woodhead RB Chargers	10
169 Joseph Randle RB Cowboys	6
170 Cecil Shorts WR Texans	9
171 Harry Douglas WR Titans	4
172 Duke Johnson RB Browns	11
173 Alfred Blue RB Texans	9
174 Knile Davis RB Chiefs	9
175 Vernon Davis TE 49ers	10
176 Jordan Reed TE Redskins	8
177 Jerick McKinnon RB Vikings	5
178 Stephen Gostkowski K Patriots	4
179 Rams Defense	6
180 Larry Donnell TE Giants	11

181 Devin Funchess WR Panthers	5
182 Greg Jennings WR Dolphins	5
183 Ryan Fitzpatrick QB Jets	5
184 Heath Miller TE Steelers	11
185 Maxx Williams TE Ravens	9
186 David Johnson RB Cardinals	9
187 Robert Turbin RB Seahawks	9
188 Derek Carr QB Raiders	6
189 Mason Crosby K Packers	7
190 Marqise Lee WR Jaguars	8



Marqise Lee

RANK/PLAYER/POSITION/TEAM	BYE
191 Branden Oliver RB Chargers	10
192 Jared Cook TE Rams	6
193 Richard Rodgers TE Packers	7
194 Jace Amaro TE Jets	5
195 Josh Hill TE Saints	11
196 Bills Defense	8
197 Steven Hauschka K Seahawks	9
198 Ryan Mallett QB Texans	9
199 Jimmy Garoppolo QB Patriots	4
200 Jacob Tamme TE Falcons	10
201 Adam Vinatieri K Colts	10
202 Stedman Bailey WR Rams	6
203 Robert Woods WR Bills	8
204 Stevie Johnson WR Chargers	10
205 Cardinals Defense	9
206 Dan Herron RB Colts	10
207 Cole Beasley WR Cowboys	6
208 Jaelen Strong WR Texans	9
209 Dan Bailey K Cowboys	6
210 Dorial Green-Beckham WR Titans	4
211 James Starks RB Packers	7
212 Chris Matthews WR Seahawks	9
213 Duron Carter WR Colts	10
214 Cody Parkey K Eagles	8
215 Matt Jones RB Redskins	8
216 Darren Sproles RB Eagles	8
217 Broncos Defense	7
218 Josh McCown QB Browns	11
219 Troy Niklas TE Cardinals	9
220 Kenny Britt WR Rams	6
221 Mohamed Sanu WR Bengals	7
222 Allen Hurns WR Jaguars	8
223 Andrew Hawkins WR Browns	11
224 Shaun Suisham K Steelers	11
225 Cordarrelle Patterson WR Vikings	5
226 Ravens Defense	9
227 Dolphins Defense	5
228 Jermaine Kearse WR Seahawks	9
229 Markus Wheaton WR Steelers	11
230 Justin Tucker K Ravens	9
231 Matt Bryant K Falcons	10
232 Matt Asiata RB Vikings	5
233 Zach Mettenberger QB Titans	4
234 Ryan Williams RB Cowboys	6
235 Marquess Wilson WR Bears	7
236 James White RB Patriots	4
237 Eagles Defense	8
238 Brian Hartline WR Browns	11
239 Pierre Thomas RB FA	
240 Donald Brown RB Chargers	10
241 Travaris Cadet RB Patriots	4
242 Nate Washington WR Texans	9
243 Dontrelle Inman WR Chargers	10
244 Paul Richardson WR Seahawks	9
245 Ahmad Bradshaw RB FA	
246 Phillip Dorsett WR Colts	10
247 Brandon McManus K Broncos	7
248 Blair Walsh K Vikings	5
249 Jets Defense	9
250 Chiefs Defense	9

Sports Illustrated
KIDS

Goldfish FUN
GoldfishFun.com

PRESENT

SPORTSKID *of the Year*



BROOKE™

Know a kid athlete
who's great?

Dude, don't wait—
NOMINATE!



XTREME™



FINN™

I'll do it soon so
I won't be late!

Nice rhyming,
guys!



GILBERT™

**Tell us who you think should be the next
SportsKid of the Year at SIKIDS.com/SKOTY.**

**It can be you or another athlete who's between the ages of
7 and 15. But remember—we need to hear from you by
September 14, 2015!**

DWYANE
WADE

The play ideas on these
TRADING CARDS
will give you new ways to
have fun with friends!

SPORTS
of the Year
GUIDE

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. MANY WILL ENTER, ONE NOMINEE WILL WIN.

The SportsKid of the Year contest is open to legal residents of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia who are 7-15 years of age at the time of entry. Void where prohibited by law. The contest begins at 12:00 P.M. EST on July 27, 2015 and ends 12:00 P.M. EST on October 13, 2015. For entry details and Official Rules, go to SIKIDS.com/SKOTY. Official Sponsor: TI Media Solutions, Inc., 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

Pepperidge Farm, Goldfish and the Goldfish characters are trademarks owned by Pepperidge Farm, Incorporated.

© 2015 All rights reserved.

Pepperidge Farm, Incorporated is not the official sponsor. You are providing your information to the Official Sponsor and not Pepperidge Farm, Incorporated.

END ZONE

WHAT'S THE CALL?

Illustrations by
Sean Tiffany



WASHED AWAY

The Edgewater Express and the Fort Worth Force are playing a football game. A rainstorm is whipping around the stadium as Edgewater kicker Patrick Towson sets the ball up at the Express' 35-yard line for a kickoff. Just as Towson is about to kick the ball, he slides on the drenched field and into the tee. He tries to stop himself, but his kicking foot still makes contact with the ball. Instead of blasting one into the Fort Worth end zone, he ends up kicking a slow grounder. A Force player falls on the ball at midfield, and the team celebrates its strong starting field position. The Express claim they should get to redo the kickoff because Towson slipped on the soggy field. You're the ref. What's the call?



ANSWERS ON PAGE 55

2

SECOND SERVE

Rasheeda Daniels is serving during a tennis match against Sasha Foust. Daniels tosses the ball into the air but doesn't like the toss and lets it drop. She picks the ball up on the first bounce and again gets ready to serve. But Foust shouts that Daniels should be charged with a fault for allowing the ball to hit the ground. You're the chair ump. What's the call?



3

GOALIE GOAL

The Chester Crocodiles trail by a goal in the final minute of play against the Rowayton Rangers. The Crocodiles pull their goalie to get an extra attacker on the ice. The extra Crocodiles skater fires a shot on goal, but Rangers goalie Leonard Brill makes the save. Brill sees lots of open ice in front of him, so he decides to take a shot at the empty Crocodiles net. He busts out of his crease, races up ice with the puck on his stick, and shoots it from just inside his blue line. The puck skitters down the ice and into the net for what appears to be the game-clinching goal. But the Crocodiles protest. They claim that goalies aren't allowed to handle the puck outside their goal crease. Did Brill score a goal or did he earn a penalty?

GAMES

HIDE AND SEEK

A team name is hidden in each of the sentences below. Use the clues to figure out the name, and then write it in the space provided. We did the first one for you.



He spilled ravioli on Sam during halftime.

HINT: Led by quarterback Matthew Stafford, this team has a wide receiver nicknamed Megatron.

ANSWER: L I O N S

1. Roy also caught a foul ball at the game.

HINT: This team lost to the San Francisco Giants in the 2014 World Series.

ANSWER: _____

2. The rookie studies unspoken rules after practice.

HINT: This NBA squad plays in the Grand Canyon state.

ANSWER: _____

3. He injured his thumb, ear, shoulder, and elbow.

HINT: Matt Forte broke the single-season record for most receptions by a running back with 102 in 2014 while playing for this NFL team.

ANSWER: _____

4. I shook the safe very hard in an attempt to open it.

HINT: In 2012 this team beat the Minnesota Lynx to win the WNBA championship.

ANSWER: _____

5. Would you like to purchase a camera, Ms. Johnson?

HINT: This NFL team plays in a city known for its Gateway Arch.

ANSWER: _____



MYSTERY ATHLETE

CLUE #1 The Mystery Athlete made his major league debut as an outfielder for the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2013.

CLUE #2 In 2014 the Mystery Athlete tied the Dodgers' record for triples in a game (three). He finished the season with nine total triples.

CLUE #3 The Mystery Athlete was selected to a team of MLB players to play against the All-Stars of Nippon Professional Baseball in Japan in the 2014 Major League Baseball Japan All-Star Series.

THE MYSTERY ATHLETE IS:

TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Indiana Fever forward Tamika Catchings (*right*) grabbed her 3,000th career rebound in June. Who is the WNBA's all-time rebound leader?

- A. Swin Cash
- B. Lisa Leslie
- C. Tina Thompson

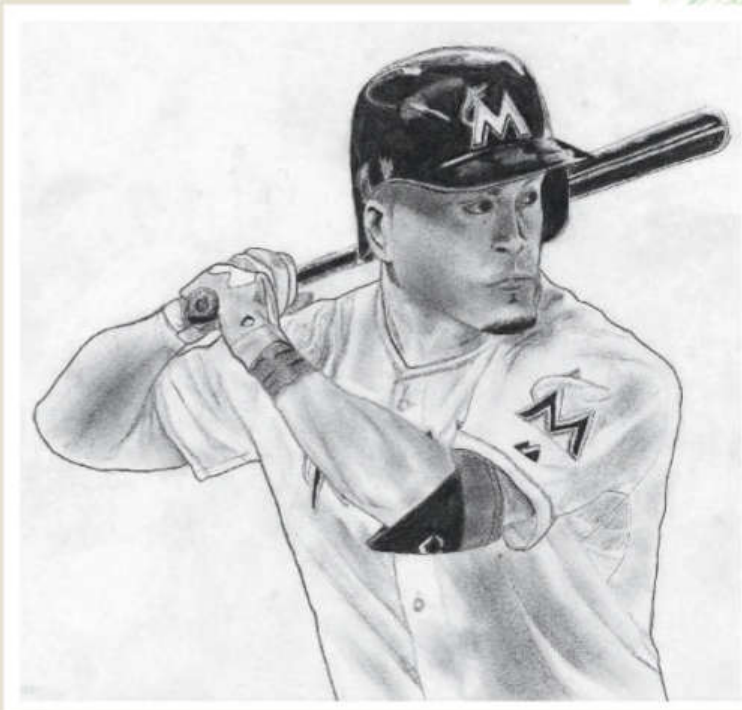
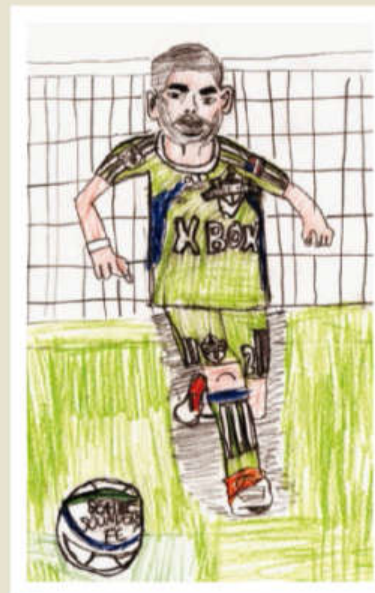


ART GALLERY

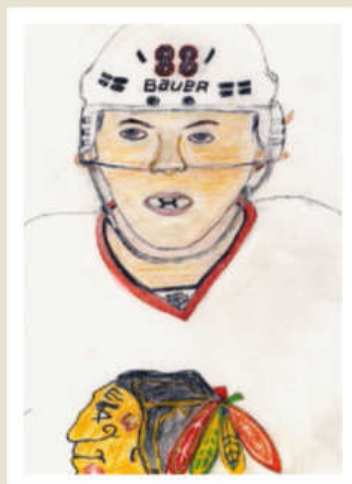
A.J. Green
Nate, 11,
California



Clint Dempsey
Justin, 12,
Ohio



Giancarlo Stanton
Nicholas, 12,
North Carolina



Patrick Kane
Trent, 12,
New York

Send your drawings to:
ART GALLERY, SI Kids,
1271 Avenue of the Americas,
31st Floor, New York, NY
10020-1393. Please include
your name, address, date of birth,
and the name of the athlete.



Send your cards to: **COMIC CARDS**, SI Kids, 1271 Avenue of the Americas, 31st Floor, New York, NY 10020-1393. Please include your name, address, and date of birth.

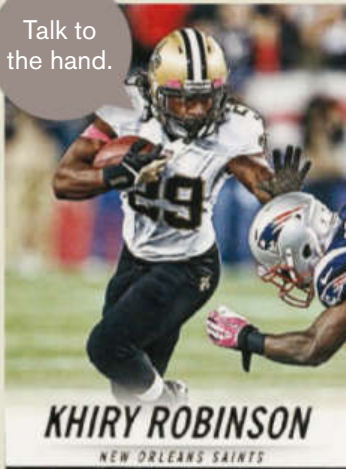
COMIC CARDS

Help!
I'm being
chased by
birds!



Jamie, 11, Georgia

Talk to
the hand.



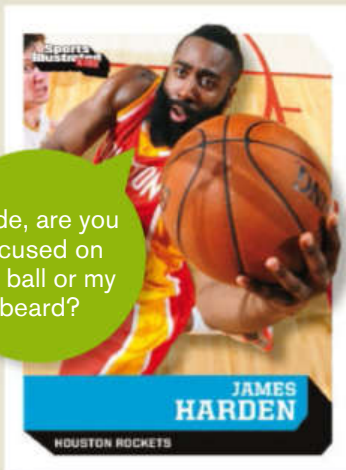
Jacoby, 9, New York

OMG!
I've been
looking for
you!



Nate, 11, California

Dude, are you
focused on
the ball or my
beard?



Sam, 9, Indiana

A dance
party. A
dance party!



Charlotte, 13, Washington

ANSWERS

• What's the Call? (page 52)

1. The Express do not get another chance. A kickoff is legal once it goes 10 yards or is touched by the receiving team. The Force take possession where they recovered the ball.
2. You do not charge Daniels with a fault. Under USTA rules, a player who decides not to hit a serve after he or she lets their toss drop may allow the ball to bounce or catch it.
3. The goal counts. Brill can play the puck anywhere in front of his net, up to the center-ice red line. NHL rules only limit where goalies can handle the puck behind the goal line on their own half of the ice.

• Hide and Seek (page 52)

1. Royals
2. Suns
3. Bears
4. Fever
5. Rams

• Trivia (page 52)

B. Lisa Leslie (3,307)

• Mystery Athlete (page 52)

Yasiel Puig, outfielder,
Los Angeles Dodgers

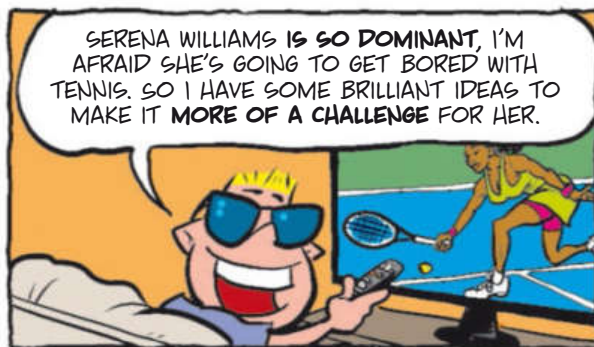


SPORTS ILLUSTRATED KIDS (ISSN 1042-394X) is published monthly except for the January/February issue. PUBLISHER: Time Inc. (EST # 88838121710001), principal office: Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020-1393. Periodicals postage paid in New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40101078. Return undeliverable Canada addresses to: Postal Stn. A, PO Box 4322, Toronto, ON, M5W 3G9 #1227819747. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SPORTS ILLUSTRATED KIDS, P.O. Box 30654, Tampa, FL 33630-0654. ©2015 Time Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. SPORTS ILLUSTRATED KIDS is a registered trademark of Time Inc. Printed in the U.S.A. U.S. subscriptions are \$31.95 for one year. Subscription orders should be sent to SPORTS ILLUSTRATED KIDS, P.O. Box 30654, Tampa, FL 33630-0654. Subscribers: If the postal authorities alert us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within two years. Your bank may provide updates to the card information we have on file. You may opt-out of this service at any time. Mailing List: We make a portion of our mailing list available to reputable firms. If you would prefer that we not include your name, please call or write us. Customer Service and Subscriptions: For 24/7 service, please use our website: <http://sikids.com/customerservice>. You can also call 1-800-992-0196 or write to SI Kids at P.O. Box 30654, Tampa, FL 33630-0654. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

BUZZ BEAMER

By Bill Hinds

SERENA WILLIAMS IS SO DOMINANT, I'M AFRAID SHE'S GOING TO GET BORED WITH TENNIS. SO I HAVE SOME BRILLIANT IDEAS TO MAKE IT MORE OF A CHALLENGE FOR HER.



SHE'LL LOVE MY FIRST IDEA BECAUSE SHE IS SO INTO CUTTING-EDGE FASHION: TENNIS HEELS.



IT MAY TAKE A FEW GAMES FOR HER TO GET USED TO THESE.



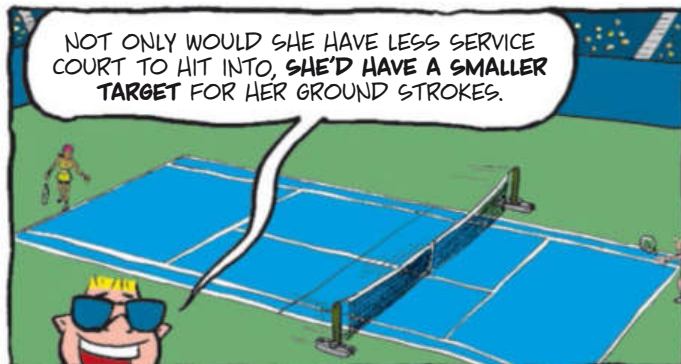
BUT HOW DO YOU MAKE A 120-MPH SERVE LESS OF A WEAPON?



YOU SHORTEN HER LANDING AREA WITH THIS MOVABLE NET.



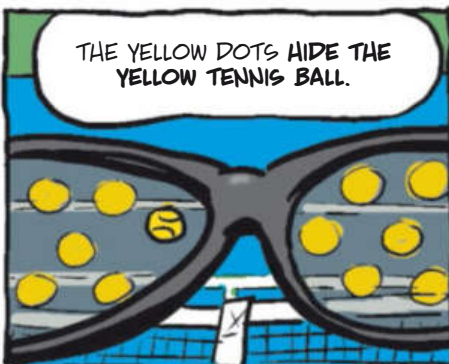
NOT ONLY WOULD SHE HAVE LESS SERVICE COURT TO HIT INTO, SHE'D HAVE A SMALLER TARGET FOR HER GROUND STROKES.



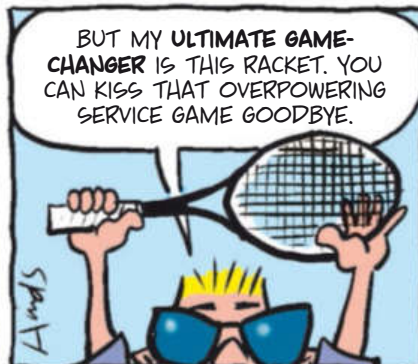
NOT ENOUGH OF A CHALLENGE? HOW ABOUT THESE SPECIAL SUNGLASSES FOR HER?



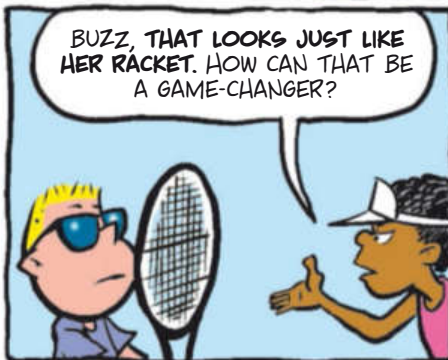
THE YELLOW DOTS HIDE THE YELLOW TENNIS BALL.



BUT MY ULTIMATE GAME-CHANGER IS THIS RACKET. YOU CAN KISS THAT OVERPOWERING SERVICE GAME GOODBYE.



BUZZ, THAT LOOKS JUST LIKE HER RACKET. HOW CAN THAT BE A GAME-CHANGER?



GIVE IT A TRY, WHITNEY. YOU'LL SEE.



THE STRINGS ARE MADE OF DRY SPAGHETTI.



SCORE YOUR ALL-ACCESS VIP PASS!

Get the VIP treatment with an insider's look at the biggest star athletes, sports stadiums, and state-of-the-art locker rooms in the world.

Available now
wherever books
are sold



SIKIDS.COM/ALLNEWACCESS

Sports Illustrated
KIDS

©2014 Time Inc.

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED KIDS is a trademark of Time Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

ADVERTISEMENT

NERF QUEST SWEEPSTAKES

You could win a NERF
Modulus ECS-10 Blaster and a
Strike and Defend Upgrade kit!
Many will enter, twelve (12) will win.



Modulus ECS-10
Blaster with the
Strike and Defend
Upgrade kit

Modulus is all about customizing your fun!

With the full system, there are more than 1,000 ways to build the motorized Modulus ECS-10 blaster your way. Practice building your own blaster by completing the puzzle below.



A



B



C



HOW TO ENTER

Get a parent's permission and **enter online at SIKids.com/nerfquest**. Enter the letter of the picture that shows the completed puzzle for a chance to win one **NERF Modulus ECS-10 Blaster and a Strike and Defend Upgrade kit**.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Purchasing does not improve your chances of winning. Many will enter, twelve (12) will win. The NERF Quest Sweepstakes is open to residents of the 50 United States and D.C. ages 7 to 15 at time of entry. Void outside United States, in Puerto Rico and wherever else prohibited by law. Sweepstakes begins at 12:00:01 PM ET on 8/28/15 and ends at 11:59:59 AM ET on 10/15/15. For entry details and Official Rules, go to SIKids.com/nerfquest. Sponsor: TI Media Solutions, 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.